

This electronic thesis or dissertation has been downloaded from the King's Research Portal at <https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/>



**Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI)**  
**A study in ecumenical theology and praxis.**

Dean, Paul

*Awarding institution:*  
King's College London

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author and no quotation from it or information derived from it may be published without proper acknowledgement.

**END USER LICENCE AGREEMENT**



**Unless another licence is stated on the immediately following page** this work is licensed

under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International

licence. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

You are free to copy, distribute and transmit the work

Under the following conditions:

- Attribution: You must attribute the work in the manner specified by the author (but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work).
- Non Commercial: You may not use this work for commercial purposes.
- No Derivative Works - You may not alter, transform, or build upon this work.

Any of these conditions can be waived if you receive permission from the author. Your fair dealings and other rights are in no way affected by the above.

**Take down policy**

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact [librarypure@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:librarypure@kcl.ac.uk) providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

**Title:**

Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI): a study in  
ecumenical theology and praxis.

By

Paul Bruce Dean

A Thesis Submitted to the

King's College London

For the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Theology and Religious Studies

School of Art & Humanities

The King's College London

2018

## **Abstract:**

Dean, Paul Bruce  
2018

Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel  
(EAPPI): a study in ecumenical theology and praxis.

Mentor: Professor Werner Ustorf

The place of theology within the EAPPI programme is investigated, initially noting symptoms of tensions between theology and praxis. Using the methods of historical inquiry - textual analysis, empirical data collection, biblical and theological questioning - the issue is shown to be much deeper, namely that “theology” has been compromised at source and praxis is therefore affected. The central question becomes how to restore EAPPI’s use of theology to its critical potential. Materials specific to EAPPI assist the research: World Council of Churches (WCC) and EAPPI archives; semi-structured interviews of Ecumenical Accompaniers in Hebron, Bethlehem, East Jerusalem, Jayyus, Tulkarm and Yanoun; and the researcher’s experience of serving on an EAPPI Policy Group. Christian Peacemaker Teams and Peace Brigades International have helped to shape EAPPI accompaniment. Palestine/Israel’s historical background is considered in relation to EAPPI, as well as key developments in the missiology of the WCC. EAPPI presents a stance that can be described as a secularised version of the Gospel. The many different religious framings of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict demand a theological response that requires EAPPI to have an ecumenical theology. A theological reflection chapter supplies biblical and theological reflection aiming to enhance the position of theology within EAPPI. Contextual and global theology are represented through writings of Munib Younan and Miroslav Volf. The dissertation concludes on the basis of the evidence of earlier chapters, that there is a risk to EAPPI praxis if it continues to underplay theology, neglecting a vital source of critique that is capable of shaping praxis. When partisan theology is rejected, the alternative is not “theology” that is subordinate to a pre-determined narrative, or “no theology” but an ecumenical theology that is appropriate to a conflicted, multi-faith environment. The contours of such a theology are offered.

## **Acknowledgements:**

Many people are due thanks for advice and encouragement, enabling this dissertation to be brought to completion, only some of whom I can mention here. Professor Paul Joyce gave timely encouragement and arranged for supervision and helpful advice by Professor Werner Ustorf. A change of faculty took place when I became a student in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at KCL, and before the transfer I was supervised by Dr Luke Bretherton, to whom I am also grateful. EAPPI staff in London and Jerusalem gave me assistance in accessing archives, answering questions and enabling me to meet interviewees in Jerusalem and the West Bank. Fr Michael McGarry, Sr Bridget Tighe and staff at the Tantur Ecumenical Institute for Theological Studies were unfailingly helpful, and the British Trust for Tantur was generous in its support of my participation in the scholars' program at Tantur. The United Reformed Church at Synod and local level enabled sabbatical leave and supported the task as continuing ministerial education. Throughout I have been working as a minister in Local Ecumenical Partnerships with Methodists in Godalming and then in South Kent, so I have much reason to be grateful to the Methodist Circuits in those places, and to my former colleague Revd Dr Philip Luscombe. Financial support was received from various sources including the Beane Trust and the Coward Trust and also from family members, especially my mother Mrs Sylvia Dean. I also want to thank my wife, Rowena whose generosity, kindness, patience and love is a great source of encouragement in life and faith. For all these blessings, and many others besides, I give thanks and praise to God.

Paul Dean, 11 September 2018.

## Table of Contents

<b>Title:</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Abstract:</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Acknowledgements:</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>8</b>
1.1 The journey that led to this study. ....	8
1.2 Why this study matters and the questions I am seeking to address .....	13
1.3 An outline of the core thesis or argument and the aims of the study.....	14
1.4 How the study fits with the wider field of scholarly debate. ....	15
1.5 The limits and scope of the study.....	16
1.6 How the framework and methods used address the questions being asked.....	17
1.7 A summary of the thesis structure.....	17
1.8 Points of originality.....	19
1.9 Shaping the argument .....	20
<b>CHAPTER 2 FRAMEWORK AND METHODS</b> .....	<b>22</b>
2.1 Introduction.....	22
2.2 Framework.....	22
Critical Realism (CR) .....	22
Critical Realism and Theological Reflection .....	23
Critical Realism and the context of Palestine/Israel .....	26
Why stop short of meta-reality?.....	27
Critical Realism in this study .....	28
CR framing a research method .....	29
2.3 Research Methods .....	30
Aims of the research.....	30
Research tools .....	32
Sorting the data and extracting the themes .....	34
2.4 Shaping the argument .....	36
<b>CHAPTER 3 ACCOMPANIMENT TRADITIONS</b> .....	<b>38</b>
3.1 Introduction.....	38
3.2 Forerunners of EAPPI.....	39
3.3 EAPPI reflects on accompaniment.....	40
3.4 A Swedish perspective.....	46
3.5 EAPPI contradictions.....	49
3.6 Shaping the argument .....	52
<b>CHAPTER 4 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND</b> .....	<b>55</b>
4.1 Introduction.....	55
4.2 EAPPI beginnings.....	55
A reverse timeline, February 2002 to 2000.....	61

<b>4.3 The name change from EMPPI to EAPPI.....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>4.4 The broader historical setting .....</b>	<b>70</b>
The significance of 1948 .....	70
A parallel between 1948 and EAPPI's inauguration.....	72
Some historical events between 1948 and the formation of EAPPI.....	73
The 2008 Census .....	74
<b>4.5 Conditions according to other organisations .....</b>	<b>75</b>
A UN perspective on conditions in the West Bank and Gaza .....	75
B'tselem on conditions in Area C.....	76
<b>4.6 The Christian population of Israel.....</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>4.7 Resolution on ecumenical response to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.....</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>4.8 Statement on Israel's obligations as occupying power .....</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>4.9 Some conclusions.....</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>4.10 Shaping the argument.....</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>CHAPTER 5    FIELDWORK.....</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>5.1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>5.2 Issues with qualitative research.....</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>5.3 Stories, Framings and Dissonances .....</b>	<b>88</b>
"Stories" .....	88
"Framings" .....	104
"Dissonances" .....	114
<b>5.4 Shaping the argument.....</b>	<b>117</b>
<b>CHAPTER 6    USES OF SCRIPTURES.....</b>	<b>122</b>
<b>6.1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>122</b>
<b>6.2 Sources .....</b>	<b>124</b>
A religious Zionist makes a scriptural case to 're-settle this Land'.....	124
A secular Zionist who works for peaceful co-existence.....	128
Left, Right, secular and religious - categories that oversimplify .....	130
Biblical scholarship tends to sidestep colonialism.....	132
An approach to New Testament ethics that confronts anti-Judaism and ethnic conflict.....	133
Christian self-deception in relation to Judaism, the holocaust and replacement theology .....	134
A Palestinian Christian view of scripture.....	136
The forms and influence of Christian Zionism.....	138
What possibilities are there to interpret the 'undisputed reference point' of the Qur'an? .....	139
A secular critique of orientalism.....	140
<b>6.3 Chapter summary .....</b>	<b>141</b>
<b>6.4 Shaping the argument.....</b>	<b>142</b>
<b>CHAPTER 7    THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION.....</b>	<b>145</b>
<b>7.1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>145</b>
<b>7.2 Biblical Reflection: Luke 24:13ff .....</b>	<b>146</b>
Introduction to Luke 24:13ff .....	146
Ambrose.....	147

Augustine of Hippo .....	148
J. M. Arlandson.....	148
Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza .....	149
Karl Barth.....	150
Kenneth E. Bailey .....	150
George R. Brunk III.....	151
Emil Brunner.....	152
Clarice Martin .....	152
Jerome Murphy O'Connor.....	153
R. S. Sugirtharajah.....	154
N. T. Wright.....	155
Conclusions from the Biblical reflection.....	156
<b>7.3 Theological reflection: Younan and Volf .....</b>	<b>157</b>
7.3.1 Munib Younan.....	161
Colonialism/paternalism.....	161
More than monitoring .....	162
The Eucharist - peak of accompaniment .....	162
Similar programmes.....	162
The global church .....	163
Justice and justification.....	163
The occupation as sin .....	164
The 'just peace' of Palestinian nationalism .....	165
Other religions.....	166
Palestinian genealogy.....	167
<i>Martyria</i> and Nonviolence.....	168
Dialogue and Trialogue.....	169
7.3.2 Miroslav Volf.....	171
Welcome one another.....	172
Re-narrating the history of the cross.....	173
The ambiguity of Liberation.....	174
The drama of embrace .....	177
Double vision .....	178
<b>7.4 Chapter conclusion.....</b>	<b>179</b>
<b>7.5 Shaping the argument .....</b>	<b>180</b>
<b>CHAPTER 8. CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>183</b>
<b>8.1 Chapter summary .....</b>	<b>183</b>
<b>8.2 Theology and Praxis now .....</b>	<b>186</b>
Ecumenical theology .....	186
The argument so far .....	187
Divine accompaniment.....	189
One household.....	191
Repentance given priority.....	191
Accompaniment as service .....	194
Pilgrimage as accompaniment.....	194
Insights from the Status Quo.....	195

Interpreting scriptures .....	196
Ways of accompaniment.....	198
Concluding observations .....	200
<b>APPENDIX 1. Topic guide/Interview questions: .....</b>	<b>204</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2: City of Dreams .....</b>	<b>205</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>	<b>207</b>
<b>ONLINE PUBLICATIONS.....</b>	<b>212</b>



## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 The journey that led to this study.

The chief motivation to pursue this study flowed from participation in the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) through its Britain and Ireland Policy Group, and the recognition that EAPPI brings together a coalition of people with different attitudes to Theory/Practice to achieve the goals of a World Council of Churches programme.<sup>1</sup> This presents some issues for the integrity of the programme and makes for an interesting case study. Diversity can be positive, but it also adds to the challenge when seeking to identify the proper role of theology in a Christian project. This is both a challenge for the programme internally and also in the context of Palestine/Israel. If Christian action is to take place in a conflicted multi-faith environment where competing theologies are part of the complexity, it can seem easier to push theology into the background. This dissertation investigates an alternative strategy of promoting the importance of theology if EAPPI is to be effective and true to itself. These issues have broader relevance wherever there are attempts to engage in Christian social action.

The dissertation flows in part from the experience of visiting Palestine/Israel on a number of occasions, including two extended sabbaticals at the Tantur Ecumenical Institute for Theological Studies. The involvement with Tantur provided fresh insight into the complex issues of the land through the lens of Jewish, Christian and Muslim faculty and guides. Tantur communicates respect for the different traditions, a lesson in ecumenism that this dissertation seeks to reflect.

---

<sup>1</sup> The use of the term 'Theory/Practice' here invites consideration of both theory and practice together, rather than making an a priori assumption that they are in opposition to one another.

At a personal level, responses to experiences in Palestine/Israel have included previous academic study and practical involvement.<sup>2</sup> Possibilities for inter-faith and inter-community dialogue came along with involvement in the Council for Christians and Jews in the UK. A later appointment in 2006 as a denominational representative on the Britain & Ireland Policy Group of EAPPI presented an opportunity to develop an insider's view of activism in support of human rights and international law in Palestine/Israel. It is important at the outset of this project to acknowledge these personal commitments so that the reader has an opportunity to take them into account. The writer has also served as a Christian minister in the Reformed tradition for over three decades.<sup>3</sup>

According to the approach adopted here theology is a discipline that enables critical distance based on the Christian tradition and insights of contemporary theologians and, most importantly, the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. In this dissertation Critical Realism provides some tools of analysis, within an overall assumption that Christology provides a sure foundation for Christian theological reflection.<sup>4</sup>

The dissertation sets out to engage in theological reflection having first given a description of EAPPI praxis that is not wholly pre-determined by the picture EAPPI desires to present of itself, hence the necessity for the fieldwork in Palestine/Israel to discover more about how EAPPI works in practice; normally, EAPPI's public messages are vetted by programme staff.

An example of how the programme describes itself is found in a 2014 EAPPI Identity Manual, where this text is suggested as suitable for inclusion on a web page:

---

<sup>2</sup> Paul B. Dean, "'Only by Being Reconciled among Themselves Can Christians Play Their Full Part in Making Jerusalem the City of Peace for All Peoples.'" (John Paul II). A Critical Evaluation of Christian Theological Attitudes to the Holy Land and a Proposal for Possibilities for Encounter, Discussion and Dialogue between Two Contrasting Jerusalem Study Tour Groups.' (unpublished master's thesis, University of Oxford, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> The author is a minister of the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom.

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter 2 of the dissertation: Framework and Methods.

'The **Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI)** is a programme coordinated by the World Council of Churches founded in response to a call from the local Heads of Churches in Jerusalem that brings internationals to the West Bank. Since 2002, over 1,500 volunteers have come for 3 months to be Ecumenical Accompaniers (EAs). Our vision – a future in which the occupation of Palestine has ended and both Palestinians and Israelis enjoy a just peace and reconciliation with freedom and security based on international law. Our mission – to witness life under occupation, engage with local Palestinians and Israelis pursuing a just peace, to change the international community's involvement in the conflict, urging them to act against injustice in the region.'

'Our EAs offer protective presence to vulnerable communities and monitor and report human rights abuses. They join Palestinians and Israelis who work in nonviolent ways for peace and support the local churches. When they return home, EAs use their first-hand experiences to open the eyes of the world to the realities of occupation and campaign for a just and peaceful resolution to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict based on international law. EAs range in age from 25 to 70 years old and are of many different backgrounds, but what they all share is a deep dedication to human rights.'<sup>5</sup>

At the time when this research proposal was first being formulated, three events coincided to prompt a critical theological reflection on accompaniment. EAPPI's Britain & Ireland Policy Group received a report from a management consultant reflecting on the programme's logical framework from a secular perspective.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, a 2005 report of an EAPPI workshop entitled *Theological Reflection on Accompaniment* was made available. The Britain & Ireland Policy Group, because it is Quaker-led, was also invited by that denomination to reflect on the spiritual basis of their work. A feeling of cognitive dissonance arose from the recognition of competing streams of thought and action, and further exploration and study was a way to try to resolve that dissonance.

The opportunity for doctoral research was followed by the offer of a place on the Scholar's Program at the Tantur Ecumenical Institute for Theological Studies, located in Jerusalem on

---

<sup>5</sup> *EAPPI Identity Manual: Messaging & Visual Guidelines*, (Geneva: Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel, 2014), p. 15.

<sup>6</sup> *Reflective Practice - Towards a More Coherent Programme*, (Oxford: Red Kite Partners, 2006). This unpublished report of July 2006 was received on 14 December 2006. It urges that EAPPI's Ecumenical Accompaniers should be 'measuring' themselves against the context in which they find themselves, begging the question, 'What is the role of theology?'

the road to Bethlehem. The Tantur premises are near the separation barrier that is being constructed by the State of Israel. Programmes at the Tantur Institute bring together Jewish, Christian and Muslim experts who teach in a faculty resourced by the University of Notre Dame. For this project it provided a supportive community, a centre of study and a starting point from which to visit the locations of EAPPI's work in East Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Hebron, Jayyus, Tulkarm and Yanoun.

From Tantur it is possible to view some of the symbols of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Nearby is Checkpoint #300 where access is given or withheld between Bethlehem and Jerusalem, a location where Bethlehem-based Ecumenical Accompaniers do monitoring work. Tantur is within sight of the Israeli settlements of Har Homa and Gilo which some hold to be within greater Jerusalem, and others prefer to interpret as intrusions on Palestinian land. The Palestinian towns of the Bethlehem triangle, Beit Sahour, Beit Jala and Bethlehem are just the other side of the separation barrier, which at this point includes a high concrete wall with watchtowers. Israeli roads that are not freely accessed by Palestinians are visible. Through the barrier and within walking distance is a sister institution, Bethlehem University, which has links to Tantur as one of several institutions founded soon after the Second Vatican Council by papal initiative and with ecumenical vision. At the university Christians and Muslims study together. Daily life on campus depends on an ecumenical and inter-faith commitment by faculty staff.

My first personal encounter with EAPPI's Ecumenical Accompaniers came at Tantur. This was in 2004, two years after the programme came into being, and two years before the invitation to join the EAPPI Policy Group in London. It was at an international conference on the subject of "Forgiveness" at Tantur. After one of the conference lectures, an Ecumenical Accompanier responded during questions with information about EAPPI. The EA described involvement in 'monitoring' and 'protection by presence' and 'defence of human rights and international humanitarian law' and highlighted the importance of these if it is to become possible to 'end

the occupation.’ Another member of the audience spoke up for the Jewish commitment to reconciliation expressed in the well-known Hebrew phrase *tikkun olam* or ‘mending the world’. The Christian theologian Miroslav Volf was also present at the conference, and he gave a lecture advertised as “Memory, Salvation and Perdition,” in which he revisited some of his characteristic themes. Volf spoke of the impossibility in a situation of on-going conflict of forgiving and forgetting, and the (impossible?) possibility of remembering in order to be healed and reconciled.<sup>7</sup> These conversations helped to motivate my subsequent involvement with EAPPI, because this promised to provide a continuing opportunity to be informed about the conflict, and to seek paths towards change and reconciliation. This came together with involvement in the Council of Christians and Jews as a co-leader for a time of a local group in the UK, where the motive was also to become better informed through dialogue and friendship.

This study is written in recognition that all sides in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict have significant experience of victimhood. The immensity of the suffering associated with the Jewish Shoah or holocaust is recognisable to anyone who visits memorials such as that at Yad Vashem, near Jerusalem, or speaks with holocaust survivors.

The experience of Palestinians is of a different kind, but their suffering is also well evidenced, for example in former Palestinian villages such as Deir Yassin, itself a commemoration of the violence and dispossession. Since the 1948 *Nakba* and the 1967 Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories, stories of Palestinian suffering have multiplied.<sup>8</sup> This dissertation is

---

<sup>7</sup> Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation*. (Nashville TN: Abingdon Press, 1996).

<sup>8</sup> Elon Gilad, 'What Is Nakba Day? A Brief History', *Haaretz*, 14 May 2015, explains that when the State of Israel was celebrating its 50th anniversary in 1998, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat decided to inaugurate Nakba Day which is commemorated annually on 15 May. He also indicates that the first book to use the term *al-Nakba* was Constantine K. Zurayk, *Ma'na al-Nakba*, (1948), the title of which can be translated as *The Meaning of the Disaster*.

written on the understanding that neither Israeli nor Palestinian narratives should be allowed to over-write each other, nor should any third party do the over-writing. The temptation is strong to pay more attention to one narrative than another and to prefer a particular language set when describing the events of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While choices have to be made if anything is to be said at all, it is important to recognise that there are alternative ways of seeing, hearing and speaking. It is certainly relevant to ask whether this ecumenical accompaniment programme could extend its ecumenism further.

EAPPI is a programme of the World Council of Churches, an organisation with its developing account of ecumenical history and mission. As a World Council of Churches programme EAPPI fits into a broader missiological history that has changed and developed over the past century. Understanding this history is an important part of setting EAPPI's work in context.

The WCC publication *Theological Reflection on Accompaniment* (2005) helped to inspire and shape this study.<sup>9</sup> It used a methodology comparable to that employed in this project, putting the narrative and testimony of Ecumenical Accompaniers alongside theological reflection.

## **1.2 Why this study matters and the questions I am seeking to address**

The chief contribution of this study is its description and framing of the EAPPI Theory/Practice of accompaniment. It seeks to explore what critical theological reflection can contribute to the Theory/Practice of accompaniment. It seeks to find a more assured place for theology in the EAPPI programme. It is an invitation to reflect theologically.

---

<sup>9</sup> *Theological Reflection on Accompaniment: A Workshop Organised by the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel of the Commission of the Churches on Internal Affairs in Partnership with Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches, Geneva, 28-30 September 2005* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2006).

The study has undergone some changes of emphasis, as well as a change of faculty from Social Science to Arts, moving from the former Centre for Theology, Religion and Culture to the department of Theology and Religious Studies at King's College, London. With changes of faculty came changes of supervision, and new discoveries such as the importance of mission history.

As a project that developed over time, there are vestiges of earlier directions that were explored but not taken up in the way first conceived. An example in the fieldwork is a question about the spirituality of Ecumenical Accompaniers, originally aimed at discovering whether there are ways EAs could be better supported spiritually while they are working on location. That approach was set aside in favour of looking at the place of theology in the programme as a whole, in line with the initial observation that different streams of Theory/Practice are found in EAPPI. The question remains helpful in that the responses it received help to delineate in which ways EAPPI is ecumenical or inter-faith.

A unique contribution of this study is its description of a particular cohort of Ecumenical Accompaniers in 2009, and it sets their work in a broad context that recognises alternative viewpoints. It seeks to show that there are resources available that enable critical theological reflection to play a more significant role in the EAPPI Theory/Practice of accompaniment and arising from that some proposals are brought forward for future practice.

### **1.3 An outline of the core thesis or argument and the aims of the study.**

There are two main pillars to this study, the first setting contemporary practice in context and the second reflecting theologically on that practice. The study seeks to address the relationship between EAPPI's theology and practice. It grows out of an observation that the role of theology tends to be undermined by other currents of Theory/Practice, even in this WCC programme. The study seeks a method of critical theological reflection that will open up

the possibility that instead of being side-lined, or brought to prominence only when convenient, theological reflection will claim a rightful place that is central to EAPPI. To succeed this needs to be a method that attends to alternative voices, and that has an on-going place and relevance for the programme. As a critical method it will be responsive to evidence and will not insist on a pre-determined outcome.

The starting point is that EAPPI, in its way of responding to that context, tends to undermine its own theological housing. If this is supported by evidence when the programme is set in context and the case study analysed, it becomes relevant to consider whether a better fit can be achieved between the theology and practice of EAPPI and if so how that could be brought about.

#### **1.4 How the study fits with the wider field of scholarly debate.**

EAPPI is a World Council of Churches ecumenical programme, and this study is framed within this WCC ecumenical context.

Charles R. Harper's *O Acompanhamento* recorded an earlier history of WCC accompaniment in countries other than Palestine/Israel. His account subtitled 'Ecumenical Action for Human Rights in Latin America 1970-1990' provides a record of accompaniment in Brazil, Uruguay, Chile, Argentina, Paraguay, Bolivia and Peru. These were two decades when military dictatorship held sway. Harper notes that the Brazilian Portuguese word for accompaniment is in daily use and, 'signifies "being together with" (as alongside a travel companion or person of trust), "follow" (go in the same direction), "associate with" (to harbour the same conviction), "escort" (as to an event), or "provide harmony for" (as when playing a guitar). In this context, the word conveys deep pastoral overtones of solidarity.'<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Charles R. Harper, *O Acompanhamento: Ecumenical Action for Human Rights in Latin America 1970-1990* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2006), p. 4, second footnote, where the Brazilian Portuguese word is given as "accompanied (*acom-panharam*)."



Roberto S. Goizueta uses the term 'Theology of Accompaniment' in his *Caminemos Con Jesús*, an attempt to define a Hispanic/Latino theology.<sup>11</sup> Another figure from Latin America who took up the theme of accompaniment is the martyred Archbishop Oscar Romero, who in his fourth Pastoral Letter highlighted an Apostolate of Companionship and referred to "companionship" or "following" embodied in his belief that 'Christianity is supposed to evangelize the whole of human life, including the political dimension.'<sup>12</sup>

Examples of organisations whose practice is comparable to EAPPI accompaniment include the Christian Peacemaker Teams and the Peace Brigades International. Kathleen Kern's *In Harm's Way*, gives a detailed account of CPT's work, including a chapter on 'Hebron, West Bank 1995-2000'. CPT employs full timers who build experience of accompaniment in a number of different contexts based on non-violent direct action or 'getting in the way.' CPT sprang from Ron Sider's 1984 address to the Mennonites World Conference encouraging 'the small family of Anabaptists across the world to help shape history in the next two decades.'<sup>13</sup>

## **1.5 The limits and scope of the study.**

The main focus of this study is the critique of EAPPI accompaniment with regard to the consistency of its Theory/Practice and also to facilitate a theologically based critique. Several of the topics touched upon are potentially vast in scope, including Critical Realism, the history of mission, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Biblical studies, Christology and methods of

---

<sup>11</sup> Roberto S. Goizueta, *Caminemos Con Jesús: Toward a Hispanic/Latino Theology of Accompaniment* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995).

<sup>12</sup> Oscar Romero, *Voice of the Voiceless: The Four Pastoral Letters and Other Statements* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1985).

<sup>13</sup> Kathleen Kern, *In Harm's Way: A History of Christian Peacemaker Teams* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009).

theological reflection. The ecumenical mission history of the WCC as relevant to EAPPI sets the broad parameters of the study.

## **1.6 How the framework and methods used address the questions being asked**

The methodology involves approaching the critique of EAPPI accompaniment from two main directions, via fieldwork and theological reflection. The purpose of the fieldwork interviews is to construct an snapshot of EAPPI accompaniment that tests the programmes' account of itself, recognising that it is an account that is subject to editorial control by programme staff. When I was travelling from Tantur to the locations in the West Bank and East Jerusalem it was possible to discover something about the context and conduct a series of semi-structured interviews with Ecumenical Accompaniers and others closely associated with EAPPI's work in Palestine/Israel.

The philosophical 'underlabouring' for the project is provided by Critical Realism and used to suggest how the worldview implied by theological reflection on accompaniment can make sense both to a social scientist and a theologian.<sup>14</sup> The theological pillar of the project relies on an account of Christology derived from the New Testament and the Christian tradition and can help to provide the critical distance needed for a theological critique. Comparison between insights drawn from Christology and the description and analysis of EAPPI Theory/Practice brings critical theological reflection to life. The aim is to show what contribution theological reflection can make to the EAPPI programme, so providing insights for those engaged in Christian action of this or similar kind.

## **1.7 A summary of the thesis structure**

---

<sup>14</sup> *Dictionary of Critical Realism*, ed. by Mervyn Hartwig (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 490. Hartwig gives a definition of 'underlabouring.' It refers to 'conceptual clarification and removal of obstacles and objections.'

There are eight chapters to the dissertation as follows:

1. Introduction
2. Framework and Methods
3. Accompaniment Traditions
4. Historical Background
5. Fieldwork
6. Uses of Scriptures
7. Theological Reflection
8. Conclusion

The *Framework and Methods* chapter explains why Critical Realism provides a philosophical underpinning for the project and the chapter also helps to show how critical analysis and theological reflection belong together.

The third chapter, *Accompaniment Traditions* shows that EAPPI belongs in a tradition of accompaniment practice making some comparisons between EAPPI and other examples of accompaniment such as Christian Peacemaker Teams and Peace Brigades International. This helps to show that accompaniment is not inevitably a Christian practice.

The *Historical Background* chapter explores the background to EAPPI in the World Council of Churches and its mission history. An account is given of how the EAPPI programme began, together with information on the WCC background and timelines highlighting how EAPPI emerged and setting it in the context of Palestinian and Israeli history.

The *Fieldwork* chapter considers Ecumenical Accompaniers, interviewing them in six locations: Hebron, Bethlehem, East Jerusalem, Tulkarm, Jayyus and Yanoun. Programme officials in London, Jerusalem and Bethlehem also gave interviews. The aim was to provide a snapshot of EAPPI accompaniment at a particular time, the closing months of 2009 when an invitation to join the Scholars' programme at the Tantur Ecumenical Institute presented an opportunity to carry out this part of the research.

The *Uses of Scriptures* chapter attempts to outline a spectrum of views by comparing some of the narratives around Palestine and Israel, showing some commonalities but also indicating the great complexity of the context in which EAPPI works, and the difficulty of reconciling opposing views.

The *Theological Reflection* is built on a biblical reflection and theological reflection founded on Christology. Its relatively late appearance in the chapter order reflects the fact that critical theological reflection is the fruit of the dissertation as a whole. It does not imply that theological reflection has a lower priority, but rather that it has a culminating role.

The *Conclusion* reviews the project as a whole, indicating how the complexity of the context in which EAPPI is at work, and the difficulty of finding common ground in a multi-faith conflicted context need not undermine the use of theology as the appropriate source of on-going critique for a Christian programme. The project overall hopes to encourage confidence in a type of critique, based in Christology, that is capable of strengthening Christian action.

### **1.8 Points of originality**

The method adopted seeks to show how the landscape looks when Christians do not try to over-write the Israeli and Palestinian narratives. The history of mission in the region is full of failed attempts to impose a Christian narrative. The approach in this thesis is more reflexive, using Christology and the treasure chest of theology as a source of internal critique. A point of originality is the attempt to describe the EAPPI programme from this kind of critical perspective. Some accounts of EAPPI's work are promotional and advocate the programme's goals with an underlying assumption that EAPPI's stance is completely correct. The attempt is made to provide EAPPI with tools to enable self-criticism through theological reflection.

This account is not critical in the sense of being hostile to EAPPI, but one by a former EAPPI insider that seeks to be constructively critical. It presents a use of theological reflection that is

capable of influencing EAPPI's Theory/Practice from within, using a Christological frame of reference. The aim is to encourage EAPPI to develop the Theory/Practice of accompaniment within an appropriate theological framework. By adopting a more self-critical approach EAPPI is likely to become more amenable to dialogue with those who do not share the same perspective.

## **1.9 Shaping the argument**

The enquiry that led to this dissertation began with recognition of the diversity represented in the WCC and among those connected with the EAPPI programme, resulting in some awkward contradictions and a consequent sense of cognitive dissonance. The WCC has relied on consensus decision-making in committee to shape EAPPI theology and praxis. The context of Ecumenical Accompaniment in Palestine/Israel is a complex multi-faith and secular environment, and even looking through a Christian lens there are competing theologies and viewpoints that are hard to reconcile.

My experiences of inter-faith dialogue and extended study tour visits to Palestine/Israel have helped to shape the viewpoint expressed in this dissertation, encouraging respect for alternative ways of seeing and searching for possibilities of dialogue and reconciliation. There is a tension to address between activism that confronts injustice, and the attempt to build understanding and reconciled community through dialogue.

EAPPI is self-described as an "ecumenical" programme and there is a theological task to explore the dimensions/limitations of ecumenism in relation to accompaniment. The dissertation investigates EAPPI theology and praxis, and the environment in which it finds practical expression, seeking a better understanding of EAPPI's history and potential. The task is not just to critique EAPPI theology and praxis but also to recognise that the dynamic

political situation in Palestine/Israel demands that EAPPI's ecumenical theology and praxis responds to changing circumstances.

## CHAPTER 2                      FRAMEWORK AND METHODS

### 2.1 Introduction

The research has two main pillars: description and analysis, and theological reflection. The two are closely connected because theological reflection is used to address issues raised in the first part of the research, with the aim of enhancing the place of theology in EAPPI praxis.

This *Framework and Methods* chapter describes in more detail how the two pillars of the research connect. This is done, firstly by explaining the choice of Critical Realism (CR) and arguing that this option can be pursued without sacrificing theological integrity; secondly, by outlining the research methods and how they contribute to the whole.

### 2.2 Framework

#### Critical Realism (CR)

Some limited use is made of CR in shaping the conceptual framework of the dissertation, an option inspired by Roy Bhaskar, founder of CR and Alan Norrie, an interpreter of it.<sup>15</sup> This choice is an expedient one, rather than an attempt to fly the flag for CR. Other choices could have been made but having opted for CR this section seeks to recognise the implications of that choice. Use of CR is consistent with a theological narrative, as long as care is taken not to undermine the role of theology which, according to a main argument of this dissertation, should be central to EAPPI praxis.

Mervyn Hartwig's *Dictionary of Critical Realism* defines Critical Realism (CR) as,

---

<sup>15</sup> Alan W. Norrie, *Dialectic and Difference: Dialectical Critical Realism and the Grounds of Justice* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2010). Roy Bhaskar and Alan Norrie chaired postgraduate seminars on Critical Realism at the Institute of Education during 2008/9. In 2009/10 Alan Norrie led a reading seminar based on a pre-publication draft of *Dialectic and Difference*.

'A movement in philosophy, social theory and cognate practices that seeks to underlabour for science and other ways of knowing in order to promote the cause of TRUTH and FREEDOM, hence the transformation of social structures and other constraints that impede that cause and their replacement with wanted and needed ones, or emancipation.'<sup>16</sup>

CR provides philosophical 'underlabouring.'<sup>17</sup> Its influence is discerned mainly in the language used to describe the method of immanent critique as searching for gaps and inconsistencies that add up to an Achilles Heel critique - a critique of weakness at a point of supposed strength; as well as its emancipatory dynamic. Some conceptual tools are also derived from CR, such as "social tetrapolity," a term to describe 'four planar social being' or 'human nature.'<sup>18</sup> The case will now be made that CR is a philosophical approach that is compatible with theological discourse.

### **Critical Realism and Theological Reflection**

Margaret Archer, Andrew Collier and Douglas Porpora defend the compatibility of theological discourse and CR, maintaining that, 'Ontological realism about God in the intransitive dimension is consistent with epistemic or experiential relativism in the transitive dimension,'<sup>19</sup> Experiences differ, but it is possible to come into conversation about our theories and to reason about them. Archer, Collier and Porpora reason that an asymmetric relationship between a privileged atheism and religious discourse can be challenged. Postmodernism has raised awareness of 'implicit structures of discursive privilege.' If it is claimed that religious belief is in part to be explained socially, so is religious disbelief.

---

<sup>16</sup> *Dictionary of Critical Realism*, p. 96. The words in capitals are the subject of articles elsewhere in the dictionary.

<sup>17</sup> Peter Winch, *The Idea of a Social Science and Its Relation to Philosophy*. (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 3-4. Winch claims that the derivation of the term 'underlabourer' is from John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.

<sup>18</sup> *Dictionary of Critical Realism*, p. 425.

<sup>19</sup> Margaret S. Archer, Andrew Collier, and Douglas V. Porpora, *Transcendence: Critical Realism and God* (London; New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 5.



Ontologically one of these positions must be mistaken, but we cannot say which position it is. Therefore, it is not irrational to argue from a religious viewpoint, any more than it is irrational to argue from a non-religious viewpoint. There is a risk entailed in both approaches, but theological discourse is not ruled out.

An example of a theologian who has incorporated CR into theological reflection is Alister McGrath, who assures his readers that 'we are not deploying this (or any) philosophy in a *foundational* role [...] but in ancillary role,' and that 'Christian theology should use or appropriate to as many world-views and forms of language as are appropriate to explicate the truth of God's Word *without* allowing itself to enter into a relationship of dependence upon them.'<sup>20</sup> It is intended to emulate that approach here.

CR offers a critique of the western philosophic tradition that has resulted in the privileging of atheism. For those seeking to justify a biblical/theological conversation this is of interest. It offers a depth ontology acknowledging the real depth of being beyond that available to experience, with the consequence that no quasi-scientific position can claim to have the monopoly on truth. The real always includes more than can be apprehended by empirical observation.

CR offers an understanding of the real that encompasses experiences, events and the 'generative mechanisms' that make them available to experience. It offers both a theory of science and of the social sciences. In social science a middle path is taken, 'between the kind of positivist naturalism that reduces human conduct to observable behaviour or social effects, and hermeneutics, which reduces the social to interpretive action'. It offers a two-way theory of structure and agency. As Norrie says, 'Intentional human agency is inconceivable without society, and society is a necessary, structuring condition for its possibility. At the same time, however, society and social structures exist only by virtue of the intentional human agency

---

<sup>20</sup> Alister E. McGrath, *A Scientific Theology: Volume 2, Reality*, (London: T & T Clark, 2002), pp. 200-01.

that reproduces and transforms them'.<sup>21</sup> This theory of structure and agency is termed a 'transformational model of social activity.'

Bhaskar's thought took a number of turns and it is only really the early ones that need concern us. He moved from transcendental realism (TR) and critical naturalism (CN), to dialectical critical realism (DCR), before taking a more controversial turn to transcendental dialectical critical realism (or the 'philosophy of meta-reality'). For the purposes of this research it is sufficient to remain close to the original CR. 'Critical realism' is a composite term that arose from a combination 'transcendental realism' and 'critical naturalism' (TR + CN = CR, or 'original critical realism').

Dialectical CR takes the standpoint that real absence or negativity links structured being to dialectical becoming in a dynamic world. It refocuses philosophy on real negativity as the essence of change and constructs a world that is "constellational" rather than oppositional in character, which can contain opposites within a broader reality. It does not move too readily to closed totalities, and by recognising instead an ethical dimension allows for right action. In the context of the Israel-Palestine, which consists of a multi-dimensional stratified reality, it is hoped that an approach shaped by CR will bring clarity without giving in too readily to binary oppositions. Critical realism gradually grows into an integrated system meant as an underlabouring for science and social science.

In the first part of this dissertation CR's main role is to underpin critical analysis on the basis of identifying gaps and inconsistencies in EAPPI praxis, a form of immanent critique. In the later *Theological Reflection* and *Conclusion* chapters CR's emphasis on "constellationality" in which difference is seen in a larger context has an influence. Theological reflection as a critical discipline is able to take up the insights of analysis and make judgements of its own based ultimately on the life and ministry of Jesus Christ i.e. Christology.

---

<sup>21</sup> Norrie, *Dialectic and Difference*, p. 10.

A distinction is made in CR between the real, the actual and the empirical, such that the domain of the real includes mechanisms, events and experiences; the domain of the actual includes something less, events and experiences; the domain of the empirical is made up of experiences. There is much more to the real and the actual than just the empirical.

Bhaskar's account both of science and of social science is more layered and complex than positivism would suggest, and it avoids the collapse of ontology into epistemology encountered in some forms of postmodern linguistic philosophy, a mistake which CR names the 'epistemic fallacy.' In a CR account of science generative mechanisms are posited, and similarly in a CR account of social science there are concept-dependent transfactual social structures. Critical realists are committed to the removal of social injustices and ills, and to a world in which the different forms of alienation are overcome and the free development of each is the condition of the free development of all.<sup>22</sup>

### **Critical Realism and the context of Palestine/Israel**

The research project is not just concerned with theology and accompaniment, it also has a particular setting, that of Palestine and Israel. The research confronts us with a zone of conflict where a common difficulty is the over-simplification of complex factors into dualities. This tends to happen wherever there is conflict and it is not always helped by the dualistic tendency of our Western philosophical inheritance. If we take Descartes' *cogito* as a turning point, Cartesian dualism has left its mark in the splits of mind and body, knowledge and belief, self and world, certainty and scepticism. In this tradition there is a tendency to present truth as either/or, and simple dialectic as the motive force in history. CR attempts to overcome this dualism not by denying dialectic, but by recognising the stratification of reality and the complex interaction of structure and agency in the social sphere.

---

<sup>22</sup> Roy Bhaskar, *From Science to Emancipation: Alienation and the Actuality of Enlightenment* (London: Sage Publications, 2002), p. 23.

In his dialectical CR, Bhaskar argues for 'dialectical critical naturalism' in the philosophy of the social sciences.<sup>23</sup> He has a four-planar conception of human nature in society and is committed both to moral realism and ethical naturalism. The four planar 'tetrapolity' sees the human subject as having intra-subjective, inter-subjective, social and geo-historical relations. Ethical naturalism is concerned with an intransitive morality of a world that is already moralized or a-moralized. In this scheme ethics cannot be reduced to descriptive sociology. Social Science is intended to be transformative. Evaluative neutrality is abandoned.

Dialectical CR moves by stages towards a transformative practice. Comparison can be made with a practical theology, which through a process of action and reflection turns theology from theory into praxis. The point of theological reflection is not to remain value free and neutral, limited to description, but as in the tradition of the prophets and the evangelists to identify the need and possibility of change, and, in the language of the gospels, to help inaugurate the Kingdom. In both CR and in applied or practical theology the goal is transformative praxis.

### **Why stop short of meta-reality?**

Bhaskar, having introduced first transcendental realism, and then critical naturalism, leading on to dialectical critical realism, took a further turn into the realm of 'meta-reality' (or transcendental DCR). In this phase his thinking is more obviously and intentionally influenced by eastern traditions of philosophy and spirituality. The view is taken here that the turn from DCR to transcendental DCR could compromise the normative status of the biblical and theological framework of this study. In TDCR Bhaskar uses terms such as 'ground state', 'higher state' and 'cosmic envelope' and 'enlightenment.' Although these are not incompatible with some Christian accounts of the soul and of God, they have more affinity with eastern thought influenced by Buddhism. There is coherence between meta-reality and

---

<sup>23</sup> Roy Bhaskar, *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom* (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 258.

the rest of Bhaskar's philosophical project, but when he takes this turn he leaves behind some who have found CR and DCR immensely helpful. This project travels with Bhaskar as far as DCR and not into the realms of meta-reality.

The equivalent of 'meta-reality' for this dissertation is the narrative of God's salvation of humankind through Christ. The perspective of faith is the starting point. Dialectical CR provides a framework undergirding the methods. It supports a method of identifying gaps and inconsistencies as a means to facilitating change derived from what is at heart a theological narrative.

### **Critical Realism in this study**

To recapitulate, CR builds the bridge between epistemic contingency and ontological realism in terms of judgmental rationality. The "world out there" is both more complex than we can comprehend and also capable of being influenced by the constructs of our minds; we are not left playing language games. Using judgmental rationality within the community of practical experience and ideas we come to choices that approximate to the truth as we now know it. CR encourages reflexivity because the recognition of the limits of understanding is part of coming to an apprehension of the truth.

A key idea is that of generative mechanisms. An example of this is shown in the force we call gravity. It is still a reality even when we do not see it operating as we sit still in a study or seminar chair. Reality is more than the constant conjunction of events as in Hume. It is also more than just a good sociological description. This encourages the academic and theological virtue of humility. It fits with the theological insight that all theology is prolegomena, that there are limits to what can be said, and what is said may be gainsaid because of the 'so much

more.' As Bhaskar recognizes that which is not, real determinate non-being plays a significant role in bringing about the things that are.<sup>24</sup>

It has been mentioned that the default position in social science has come to be atheism rather than religious belief. This is seen both in modernity with the movements of empiricism and idealism, and in postmodernity with the movements of anti-realism and constructivism. For a project that works on the assumption both of the existence of God and the validity of theological reflection, and which also seeks to cross the boundary between facts and values, dialectical critical realism is a fitting choice.

In *From Science to Emancipation* Bhaskar explains his view of social structure as pre-existing humanity yet sustained by human activity, which he calls the 'transformational model of social activity.'<sup>25</sup> His view of mind and other human properties is that it cannot be reduced to physics, chemistry and biology, but that there is what he calls 'synchronic emergent powers materialism.' Ideas and reasons lead on to actions in the social sphere. These actions, according to Bhaskar, are best understood in terms of four dimensions, or four-planar being: 'the stratification of the self; our transactions with others, our interpersonal relations; our relationship to the social structure; and our material transactions with nature. These four levels were necessary for the location of any act.'<sup>26</sup> Bhaskar holds that we are profoundly alienated at each of these four levels of being and we also need to think profoundly about our role in that alienation.

### **CR framing a research method**

Miles and Huberman describe themselves as,

'in the lineage of transcendental realism (Bhaskar, 1978, 1989; Harré & Secord, 1973; Manicas & Secord, 1982). That means that we think that social phenomena exist not

---

<sup>24</sup> Cf. 1 Corinthians 1:28, 'God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are.'

<sup>25</sup> Roy Bhaskar, *From Science to Emancipation*, pp. 3-46.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

only in the mind but also in the objective world – and that some lawful and reasonably stable relationships are to be found among them. The lawfulness comes from the regularities and sequences that link together phenomena. From these patterns we can derive constructs that underlie individual and social life. The fact that most of these constructs are invisible to the human eye does not make them invalid [...]. We aim to account for events, rather than simply document their sequence. We look for an individual or a social process, a mechanism, a structure at the core of events that can be captured to provide a *causal description* of the forces at work [...]. So we need not only an explanatory structure but also a grasp of the particular configuration at hand. That is one reason why we have tilted toward more inductive methods of study.

Miles and Huberman refer to Erickson who understood social facts to be embedded in social action and he held that we discover meaning,

by hanging around and watching people carefully and asking them why they do what they do [...]. [Given] this orientation towards social meaning as embedded in the concrete, particular doings of people, qualitative researchers are reluctant to see attributes of doing abstracted from the scene of social action and counted out of context.<sup>27</sup>

Taking that advice to heart, rather than simply reading the journal letters of Ecumenical Accompaniers from an archive collection or on a computer screen, it is better to research their work in context so that the analysis is contextualised. The *Fieldwork* chapter attempts this in its descriptions drawn from visits to interview Ecumenical Accompaniers on location.

## **2.3 Research Methods**

### **Aims of the research**

The research is a case study of EAPPI with the aim of studying the relationship between ecumenical theology and praxis. It is a contribution towards the theology of accompaniment, and an attempt to highlight actual or potential good practice by attending to the attitudes and behaviours of accompaniment and bringing qualitative research into dialogue with biblical and theological reflection.

---

<sup>27</sup> Matthew B. Miles and A. M. Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook* (Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications, 1994), p. 4, quoting F. Erickson, 'Some approaches to enquiry in school-community ethnography', *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 8 (2), p. 58.

The "empirical" pillar consists of the results of qualitative research fieldwork with Ecumenical Accompaniers and programme participants serving in Palestine/Israel at the time of the research, together with some interviews of former EAs and programme staff.

The aims for the fieldwork are threefold: 1) To gather further evidence for this reflection in addition to that available in existing reports and journal letters. 2) To generate evidence of the attitudes and behaviours of Ecumenical Accompaniers. 3) To discern theological aspects of these attitudes and behaviours and to use what is discerned as material for broader reflection on accompaniment and its theological significance.

The method adopted in this research sits within the interpretative paradigm of qualitative research described by Swinton and Mowat in their introduction to qualitative research.<sup>28</sup>

They draw on a definition from Denzin and Lincoln:

Qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretative, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.<sup>29</sup>

In line with CR's ontological realism, epistemological relativism and judgmental rationalism the qualitative research undertaken seeks to recognise both that the world 'out there' is a complex layered reality, and that our attempts to make sense of it, including experiences of God, are part of that complex reality. Swinton and Mowat describe the process of qualitative research as 'like a detective story without a fixed ending.' The role of the researcher is to

---

<sup>28</sup> John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London: SCM Press, 2006), pp. 28-72.

<sup>29</sup> N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln, *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1998), p. 3, as cited in J. Swinton and H. Mowat, *Practical Theology*, p. 29.



engage in a process of 'unpicking the detail of who did what, when, and why within particular situations and formulating this into evidence which will enable a fair judgment to be made.'<sup>30</sup>

In line with the biblical/theological tradition of prophetic action and also the dialectic of freedom identified in CR, the analysis searches for ways in which human social activity may be transformed in the context of EAPPI accompaniment praxis.

### **Research tools**

The practicalities of researching EAs who are serving at a number of different locations in Jerusalem and the West Bank ruled out certain styles of research. The option of applying to serve as an EA and engaging in participant observation over a three-month period was considered and ruled out. Had such an application been successful, gaining ethical approval and the consent of programme staff and other accompaniers (whose contributions to the research would have been difficult to anonymise) the research would have been limited to the one placement of the researcher. The evidence collected would have resembled the journal letter reports already available from EAs.

The choice was made to seek an overview by visiting all six locations where EAs were active during autumn 2009 when the fieldwork took place. Two EAs in each location were invited to take part in a semi-structured interview, a sample equivalent to 50% of EAs then active in Jerusalem and the West Bank. This enabled a snapshot of the EAPPI praxis at that particular time. Comparing this with other sources of information such as programme archives provides an element of triangulation of the results.

The semi-structured interview provided a technique that was practical to complete during the time available. There was the practical difficulty of reaching the locations where EAs were serving, which meant negotiating military checkpoints and travelling on public transport in

---

<sup>30</sup> Swinton and Mowatt, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, p. 30.

the variable conditions imposed by the military occupation, and negotiating travel by bus within the West Bank. Within the limitations of availability of individuals for interview and the possibilities for travel in these restricted conditions, it proved possible to interview a sample of individuals who represented a number of different sending countries. The use of the semi-structured interview rather than a straight questionnaire allowed more flexibility to follow up useful lines of enquiry where these emerged, within a broadly similar framework. This technique was more informative than a standard written questionnaire and there is more sense of context, and therefore a 'thicker description', to use a term of Clifford Geertz.<sup>31</sup> It is easier when covering a larger number of interviewee informants to safeguard them against being identified from their responses after they have been anonymised and included in the finished report.

That the interview material comes from different locations presents a further element of triangulation. As Denzin and Lincoln (2000) argue,

'the combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives and observers in a single study is best understood, then, as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness and depth to any inquiry.'<sup>32</sup>

Preparation for the interviews was assisted by returned EAs in the United Kingdom, who have served with EAPPI before. It would also prove possible to meet with programme coordinators and Palestinian members of the programme's local reference group.

Although there is one main method of research, that of the semi-structured interview - though combined with an element of participant observation when visiting the research locations - breadth, complexity, richness and depth was added by the multiple locations, and the multiple sending countries from which EAs are drawn.

---

<sup>31</sup> Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

<sup>32</sup> N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln, 5, cited in J. Swinton and H. Mowatt, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, pp. 50-51.

The main sample is taken from EAs serving in the field at the time of the research. They were identified by the Jerusalem coordination office who provided details of how to contact the EAs. Once contacted the EAs made their own choice whether to take part, and only did so if they had heard and understood the nature of the research, received and read an information sheet, and signed a consent form. Two EAs from each of the six locations were interviewed, half the total number serving at that time.

The questions are focused around two main concepts 1) What is accompaniment? and 2) what is theological reflection on accompaniment? The thirty questions are designed to take between 45 minutes and an hour for the complete interview. There were pilot interviews with EAs who had recently returned to England at the time the list of questions was being thought through. Where the researcher found that he had not fully understood a response he repeated it back to the informant to check proper understanding.

### **Sorting the data and extracting the themes**

Data processing was achieved by transcribing the digitally recorded interviews and entering the resulting Word documents into the computer software programme NVivo, ready for coding and analysis. A number of key elements were identified which were linked across the data set.<sup>33</sup> Findings were grouped and classified around common motifs. Swinton and Mowat advise identifying from the common motifs a central question that,

'works towards a culmination in one meticulously-generated and meaning laden 'central theological question' which seeks to encapsulate the [...] core concerns; this is the spring-board , then for later theological reflection (Browning 1991).'

A critical realist methodology, with its emphasis on fragmented dialectic, open totality and constellationality, encourages a more open-ended approach, but the fieldwork enabled

---

<sup>33</sup> Harry F. Wolcott, *Writing up Qualitative Research* (London: Sage, 2009), p. 38.

<sup>34</sup> Swinton and Mowatt, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, p.148.

collection of further evidence relevant to the central concern to investigate the relationship of theology and accompaniment praxis.

What is attempted in this project is not ethnography but there are some ethnographical influences. In the taking down and analysing of the narratives of Ecumenical Accompaniers some of the methods and insights of ethnographical research were used, such as coding, categorizing and developing themes. This research process was designed to offer qualitative data of use to the later theological reflection.

There is no such thing as complete objectivity in qualitative research and it should be recognised that the researcher's own presence, interests and actions will have shaped the encounters and affected outcomes.

In a checklist of queries to be asked of a qualitative study Miles and Huberman make a similar point,

Has the researcher been explicit and as self-aware as possible about personal assumptions, values and biases, affective states – and how they may have come into play during the study?<sup>35</sup>

There are advantages and limits to any research design. A researcher can make biases and influences explicit to some extent. A major one for this study is that the researcher came to the research as an EAPPI insider. Such influences can be taken into account, but there will be other factors that through ignorance, lack of awareness or lack of insight the researcher cannot bring to light. There are the limits of the chosen method of research, which may or may not throw up all the relevant factors for the subsequent analysis.

The feelings and commitments of the researcher are not just there to be discounted in the interest of objectivity. They also result in the will to see the study through and to recognise

---

<sup>35</sup> Miles and Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis*, p. 278.

the research topic as an area of interest and importance. It is feelings such as these that human projects, like this one, depend on to succeed.

## **2.4 Shaping the argument**

Critical Realism (CR) provides philosophical “underlabouring”, or conceptual clarification for this dissertation, though it is recognised that other choices could have been made for this role. CR can be consistent with a theological narrative and provides some tools, in particular when approaching the topic of ‘human nature’ which is central to EAPPI as a programme that works to uphold human rights and International Humanitarian Law.

The chapter describes Roy Bhaskar’s version of CR, a founder of this philosophical approach whose thought took a number of turns, with original CR as the version adopted here. This offers an account of reality that is more layered and complex than positivism would suggest and avoids what CR terms the “epistemic fallacy.” It also encourages transformative practice.

The dissertation has the two main pillars of qualitative research and theological reflection, including semi-structured interviews with Ecumenical Accompaniers while active in the field, as well as theological reflection on Ecumenical Accompaniment working towards a revised theology and praxis. That revision will acknowledge that the complex realities of Palestine/Israel cannot be reduced to a political slogan or an approach that sidesteps the nuanced task of seeking to better understanding how the many different religious and secular narratives fit into a constellational whole.

CR holds that knowledge involves accounting for events we observe in terms of underlying structures and other mechanisms which generate them. This helps to build a case for research that has an element that is evidence-based and is derived from fieldwork, while taking seriously the role of scriptures and theology.



## CHAPTER 3 ACCOMPANIMENT TRADITIONS

### 3.1 Introduction

The term "accompaniment" is now explored in its networks of meaning. Precedents to EAPPI praxis are indicated, references in the available literature noted, and similarities to other programmes observed to help set EAPPI in context.

In the Oxford English Dictionary accompaniment is a term used in music or heraldry or more generally as follows:

'Anything that accompanies: 'something attending or added as a circumstance to another, either by way of ornament, or for the sake of symmetry or the like.' Bailey 1731. Not in Johnson.'

EAPPI applies the term to a specific practice. The first assessment report on the EAPPI programme in November 2002 provided this explanation:

'Accompaniment in this context is used as a term to mean **active Christian solidarity and advocacy for human rights and non-violent resistance to end the illegal occupation of Palestine** developed by the WCC 2001 delegation to the OPT and the ecumenical gatherings in August 2001 and February 2002, as adopted by the WCC Executive and Central Committees in 2001 and 2002. Palestine is the first focus of the Decade to Overcome Violence: Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace (2001-2010), in 2002.'<sup>36</sup>

EAPPI chose to be bold and rewrite the dictionary by inventing the term "Ecumenical Accompanier" to describe its field workers, but the term "accompaniment" itself was already well established. For example Charles Harper in *O Acompanhamento*, 'describes how the churches and others around the world, through the World Council of Churches, accompanied (*acom-panharam*) South American churches and human rights groups during [...] two harsh

---

<sup>36</sup> S. Eskidjian, 'Report on the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) and Main Recommendations for Consideration and Action, November 2002' (Geneva: WCC International Relations Programme Executive, 2002), ref. P9011194.

decades of military rule in the continent, and subsequently in their continuing struggle against impunity for past crimes.'<sup>37</sup>

### 3.2 Forerunners of EAPPI

EAPPI has other antecedents. The Peace Brigades International (PBI) has worked alongside human rights activists in Columbia, since 1994.<sup>38</sup> The Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation gave their support to ordinary Columbian villagers rather than high profile lawyers and activists, arriving there in 2004. They have also engaged in accompaniment work in Mexico and Guatemala since 2000.<sup>39</sup> The late Archbishop of San Salvador Oscar Romero wrote of 'the apostolate of companionship' in his fourth pastoral letter.<sup>40</sup> Roberto Goizueta, a liberation theologian of Cuban heritage, used the term 'accompaniment' to describe a Latino theology among Cubans and Cuban Americans.<sup>41</sup> Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) around the world practice a form of accompaniment that has helped to shape EAPPI praxis, as indeed has PBI.<sup>42</sup> Both PBI and CPT had representatives at the meetings that were called when the EAPPI was being formed. CPT has Mennonite origins and PBI is secular in outlook, so it is not inevitable that accompaniment is framed as a Christian practice.<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> Charles R. Harper, *O Acompanhamento: Ecumenical Action for Human Rights in Latin America 1970-1990* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2006).

<sup>38</sup> L. Mahony and L. E. Eguren, *Unarmed Bodyguards: International Accompaniment for the Protection of Human Rights* (West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 1997).

<sup>39</sup> Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation, <https://krf.se/en/> [accessed 14 March 2017].

<sup>40</sup> Oscar Romero, *Voice of the Voiceless: The Four Pastoral Letters and Other Statements* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1985), pp. 155-56.

<sup>41</sup> Roberto S. Goizueta, *Caminemos Con Jesús: Toward a Hispanic/Latino Theology of Accompaniment* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995).

<sup>42</sup> Kathleen Kern, *In Harm's Way: A History of Christian Peacemaker Teams* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009).

<sup>43</sup> Peace Brigades International, <https://www.peacebrigades.org> [accessed 14 March 2017].



Viewed more broadly there are many parallels to EAPPI praxis consisting of third-party nonviolent interventions in crises and conflicts by representatives of civil society. Yeshua Moser-Puangsuwan and Thomas Weber detail examples including Pastors for Peace, the Cyprus Resettlement Project, PBI, Project Accompaniment, CPT, the Balkan Peace Team, Cry for Justice, to name only some of their selection.<sup>44</sup>

Well-known examples of nonviolent direct action include the civil rights movement under the leadership of Martin Luther King Jr.;<sup>45</sup> also the *Hind Swaraj* ("Indian Home Rule" or "self-rule") advocated by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi.<sup>46</sup> Gandhi's advocacy of *ahimsa* (non-killing) and nonviolent resistance in the era of the British Raj is influential for many programmes practicing active nonviolence including EAPPI.<sup>47</sup>

Critical Realism, as explained in the *Framework and Methods* chapter identifies that human nature concerns the intra-personal, transactions with others, our relationship to social structure, and our material transactions with nature. Gandhi showed by his inner and outer discipline and his bold actions of resistance in a spirit of nonviolence that different aspects of human nature are capable of being harnessed in the pursuit of justice. Theological reflection can help to ensure that accompaniment is multi-dimensional as regards human personhood and inter-relationships.

### **3.3 EAPPI reflects on accompaniment**

---

<sup>44</sup> Yeshua Moser-Puangsuwan and Thomas Weber, *Nonviolent Intervention across Borders: A Recurrent Vision* (Honolulu, Hawai'i: Spark M. Matsunaga Institute for Peace, University of Hawai'i, 2000).

<sup>45</sup> Martin Luther King and Clayborne Carson, *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: Intellectual Properties Management in association with Warner Books, 2001).

<sup>46</sup> M. K. Gandhi, and Anthony J. Parel, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

<sup>47</sup> Gandhi and Parel, *Hind Swaraj*, p. 55, fn. 100, indicates that, 'Although the modern spelling is 'Ahimsa', Gandhi consistently spelt it 'Ahinsa.'

EAPPI and the WCC held a workshop entitled 'Theological Reflection on Accompaniment' in 2005 at Geneva, Switzerland.<sup>48</sup> Rifat Odeh Kassir in his foreword to the report of the workshop describes how thirty EAPPI participants came together that September to discuss, 'the theological and spiritual insights gained so far in order to sharpen the vision of the programme.'<sup>49</sup>

Peter Weiderud, director of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA) at the time, suggested that although EAPPI emerged after 'intensive consultation' between 2001 and 2002, it drew on a rich history of work to oppose human rights violations and theological work on Christian responsibility. He traced the theological roots for this work back to 1937.

It could be argued that Christian social responsibility was already a feature of Faith and Order work as far back as 1910, the date of the Edinburgh Conference from which the modern ecumenical movement traces its beginnings. Weiderud's mention of 1937 likely refers to the Life and Work Conference in Oxford during the period when the WCC was in process of formation, when J. H. Oldham and others tried to meet the challenge of the rise of totalitarian regimes and the increase of secularism.<sup>50</sup>

Weiderud underlines the significance of St Pölten, a 1974 consultation on human rights that took place in Austria. This is Weiderud's summary of its achievement in highlighting Christian responsibility in relation to human rights:

---

<sup>48</sup> *Theological Reflection on Accompaniment: A Workshop Organised by the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel of the Commission of the Churches on Internal Affairs in Partnership with Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches, Geneva, 28-30 September, 2005* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2006).

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>50</sup> Graeme Smith, *Oxford 1937: The Universal Christian Council for Life and Work Conference* (Frankfurt am Main; Oxford: Peter Lang, 2004). Smith refers to Oldham's and Visser 't Hooft's concern that relations to society and the State must be 'rooted in deep repentance' because of the Church's own failings.

'The consultation noted the emphasis of the Gospel on the value of all human beings in the sight of God, on the atoning and redeeming work of Christ that has given to the human person true dignity, on love as the motive for action, and on love for one's neighbour as the practical expression of an active faith in Christ.'<sup>51</sup>

He noted the importance of, 'providing theological and biblical resources to aid the Ecumenical Accompaniers and their sending churches and organisations in their efforts to end the occupation.'<sup>52</sup> He also recognised the challenging task of addressing the biblical and theological rationale offered by Christian Zionists.

Quoting from the by-laws of the WCC and its subdivision the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, Weiderud gives the theological basis for any political response by WCC:

The World Council of Churches is a community of churches on the way to visible unity in one faith and one eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and in common life in Christ. It seeks to advance towards this unity, as Jesus prayed for his followers, "so that the world may believe" (John 17:21).<sup>53</sup>

A danger of this approach is that it represents an urge to reduce diversity into some kind of factual unity driven by social needs and not necessarily by faith, despite being dressed in ecclesiastical language.

EAPPI includes programme partners such as Quaker Peace and Social Witness who do not conform to this vision based on 'one eucharistic fellowship.' A view like Weiderud's could be described as centralised and dictatorial, fitting reality into a pre-determined bed, yet it is a reality to which the ecumenical movement itself is incapable of conforming because of Christianity's burgeoning diversity.

Critical Realism offers an alternative perspective of 'identity' and 'constellation.' Divergent views can be constellationally related. Change is an aspect of reality. Any concept of identity

---

<sup>51</sup> *Theological Reflection on Accompaniment*, p. 14.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

must allow for 'process, transformation, potential, real absence as potential, and real contradictions or tension.'<sup>54</sup>

A note included in QPSW's archive indicates that an exception was made by the WCC granting a dispensation to QPSW, who through their peace witness (for which they were Nobel Prize winners), and their active experience overseas including in Palestine and Israel, were considered ideally suited to act on behalf of the churches of Britain and Ireland.<sup>55</sup> Here we can see practicalities overruling the construction of orthodoxy. It suggests that accompaniment enables somebody to be on the way with you who is really different. Who then is accompanying whom? A constellational approach accepts contradictions and tensions and allows a new reality to emerge, a reframed ecumenism.

Bishop Dr Munib Younan, head of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, and chair of the EAPPI Local Reference Group was a participant in the September 2005 workshop and contributed an article on 'Theological Reflection and Testimony,' which is considered in the *Theological Reflection* chapter and briefly here.<sup>56</sup>

In an introduction reminding readers of an Easter message by the Heads of the local Churches in Jerusalem to which the initiative of EAPPI was said to be a response, Younan observes, 'We began with "monitoring," but monitoring is a more political term and does not mean involvement and walking together with the Churches. We were talking about "accompaniment."<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> Cf. *Dictionary of Critical Realism*, p. 251, on 'identity', and pp. 78-79 on 'constellation'.

<sup>55</sup> The American Friends Service Committee, <http://quakernobel.org/history> [accessed 14 March 2017], relates that in 1947 the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded 'to the Quakers, represented by their two great relief organizations, the Friends Service Council in London and the American Friends Service Committee in Philadelphia.'

<sup>56</sup> *Theological Reflection on Accompaniment*, pp. 22-35.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

Younan seems to assume that accompaniment is a Christian practice, a claim challenged by the pre-existent diversity among accompaniment programmes, not all of which have been framed as Christian. It would be more accurate to say that both monitoring and accompaniment can be included in a Christian framework.

Moving through the headings, 'The Theological Basis of Accompaniment,' 'Accompaniment in Justice,' 'Accompaniment in Truth-Telling,' and 'The Palestinian Christian Church,' Younan holds up a biblical vision in which accompaniers join with the Churches in Jerusalem, "to come and see and be with us." He envisages a role for the Palestinian church in this context as interpreters of Islam to the West: 'we continue to be the voice of Islam to the West and the Western voice to the Muslims and Arab World.' He invites the churches to do more to recognise the presence and witness of Palestinian Christians who are Living Stones in God's land.

If that were really the chief purpose of EAPPI it would be expected that Ecumenical Accompaniers would be linked to churches, spend more time with Christians, and present a more biblical and theological message. As the *Fieldwork* chapter will show, EAPPI places its main focus elsewhere.

It seems that EAPPI is holding within itself more than one narrative concerning its purpose. It is not difficult to see why a Bishop in Jerusalem would wish to highlight the dwindling numbers of Palestinian Christians and the need for the world Church to offer support.

The Emmaus story of Luke 24:13-43 will be examined in detail in the *Theological Reflection* chapter later in the dissertation. Its importance is emphasised by the fact that Younan turns to it more than once in his article and draws out its eucharistic implications:

"We walk together as equals in humanity, and as equals in salvation. We walk together bowed in head, seeking the truth, comforting the Church of God. We accompany each other, trusting that in our wonder and uncertainty, God will inform us of our mission and our witness in a broken Holy Land. For this reason

accompaniment is an instrument and tool of the Holy Communion through which we are commissioned to be God's witnesses for justice, peace and reconciliation. It makes both companions witnesses of hope in a hopeless situation, witnesses of love in a world of hatred and retaliation, witnesses of faith in a world that ignores God, witnesses of truth in a world of propaganda and lies."<sup>58</sup>

This eucharistic emphasis echoes Weiderud. Younan's account is centred on a missionary ecclesiology or an ecclesiology the central idea of which is mission. It is also a cry for help.

As Younan is a Lutheran church leader, it is interesting to consider what accompaniment means more generally among Lutherans. There is a paper written by staff of the Division for Global Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) that describes "The Accompaniment Model of Mission." The ELCA document sets accompaniment in the context of movements for renewal in Lutheran tradition that have understood God as working through ordinary lives in human community. Then it moves to a contemporary context of the interaction of churches around the world,

"Accompaniment describes a walking together that practices interdependence and mutuality; it asks the questions of the "how" and "what" of mission in the context of the relationships of a reconciling God and a human community that seeks reconciliation and wholeness."<sup>59</sup>

This is very much in line with Younan's paper, and of course it is likely that as a Lutheran he is familiar with this usage of the term "accompaniment" to describe a common mission strategy. It is the kind of thinking that I recognise as a United Reformed minister, a denomination that shares in the Council for World Mission (CWM), a mission agency that turned away from a Eurocentric model, to a partnership in mission approach.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>59</sup> Staff of the Division for Global Mission of the ELCA, 'The Accompaniment Model of Mission', *Word & World*, 25 (2005), 204-05.

<sup>60</sup> CWM, successor to the London Missionary Society, was inaugurated on 18 July 1977 after a restructuring described in Robert Latham, 'Patterns of the Spirit: Towards a Council', in *Gales of*

The ELCA document notes that a richness of gifts is discovered in a pastoral relationship (*acompañamiento pastoral*), that accompaniment is incarnational, about being (not only acting but also just being) in relationship with God and in relation with each other. A phrase borrowed from Lesslie Newbigin sets this incarnational model in a trinitarian context: 'mission is proclaiming the kingdom of the Father as faith in action; sharing the life of the Son as love in action; and bearing the witness of the Spirit as hope in action.'<sup>61</sup>

### 3.4 A Swedish perspective

A contrasting view of accompaniment comes from another Lutheran source, a report by three Swedish Lutherans who took part in early discussions about the direction and objectives of the programme: 'A as in Accompaniment.'<sup>62</sup>

Anna Åkerlund, Eduardo Villanueva and Kari Berg's paper for Swedish EAPPI of April 2002 provides an account of how the practice of accompaniment had been interpreted at an early stage in the programme. This seven-page paper provides commentary on some concepts from the statement of Mission, Scope and Objectives of the programme as they were then, addressing the following headings:

- I. To intervene in a conflict;
- II. To meet violence with nonviolence;
- III. Accompaniment as nonviolent intervention by a third party;
- IV. Accompaniment within the frame of EAPPI;
- V. Summary and conclusions.

---

*Change: Responding to the Shifting Missionary Context: The Story of the London Missionary Society 1945-1977*, ed. by Bernard Thorogood (Geneva: WCC, 1994), pp. 214-37.

<sup>61</sup> Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret: Sketches for a Missionary Theology* (London: SPCK, 1978).

<sup>62</sup> A. Åkerlund, A., E. Villanueva and K. Berg, tr. Kristina Lundquist, 'A as in Accompaniment' (Swedish EAPPI, Stockholm, 2002). Unpublished document in EAPPI archives, London.

In the early years of EAPPI, 'A is for Accompaniment' was included on the reading list recommended to British and Irish EAs during their recruitment and training process to help their understanding of accompaniment.<sup>63</sup> It remains useful in making clear some of the issues that were current in 2002. According to the introduction, it was intended to 'contribute to the ongoing discussion around the formation of EAPPI and priorities within it.'

The analysis considers the concepts of primary, secondary and third party contributors to a conflict. "Contending actors" are the primary parties. "Secondary actors" are supporters of one side or other. "Third parties" take a "nonpartisan" standpoint. Nonpartisan actors may be ready to take a stand for general principles, for example "against violence and for human rights."

"Nonviolence" in the 'A is for Accompaniment' paper is set in the tradition of Gandhi's leadership and the civil rights movement of Martin Luther King. It draws on some of the experiences of the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation (SweFOR) and Peace Brigades International (PBI) in Guatemala and Mexico. A distinction is noted between SweFOR's work focused on presence in villages under threat, and PBI's accompaniment of organisations and human rights activists. In both cases accompaniment is seen to have a dual function: 'to discourage actions of violence and to react against violence which is still used, and to spread this information through international networks.' The presence of accompaniers is intended to ensure that there are, 'enough negative consequences to crimes against human rights to prevent the aggressor from committing them.'

Åkerlund, Villanueva and Berg refer to the work of Liam Mahony and Luis Enrique Eguren who describe the conditions necessary to make accompaniment effective.<sup>64</sup> These conditions

---

<sup>63</sup> The Middle East Programme Manager, Quaker Peace & Social Witness, London, confirmed this in an email correspondence of 2009.

<sup>64</sup> L. Mahony and L. E. Eguren, *Unarmed Bodyguards*, pp. 85-86.



have to do with informing the aggressor which actions are unacceptable, informing them of the presence of accompaniers and that a possible attack will lead to consequences; the aggressor must believe that the organisation is capable of carrying through its resolutions with a clear link between international presence and international sanctions. The observer must know who the aggressor is, as actions for which nobody takes responsibility are difficult to counteract. The Swedish authors add a further condition, 'that the work is made on demand of local actors and that they understand how the nonviolence intervention can influence them and the conflict.'

A quotation from Mahony's *Unarmed Bodyguards* is used in the attempt to make a distinction between accompaniment and taking sides, 'We will be *at your side* in the face of injustice and suffering, but we will not *take sides against* those you define as enemies.<sup>65</sup> In EAPPI terminology this approach became known as 'principled impartiality,' the principle being defence of human rights on the basis of International Humanitarian Law.

The Swedish report, considering it is written on behalf of a church programme, is generally lacking in biblical and theological references. In this respect it is a vivid contrast with Younan. There are references to the Palestinian churches as 'strategic partners.' The relevant paragraph is given in full:

'The churches can be strategic partners for cooperation in this mission. The churches in the Palestinian society could offer the whole Palestinian [sic] some, although insufficient protection in their alliance with other churches in the mainly Christian west. To have *only* churches as cooperating partners, however, counteracts the aims of EAPPI. Besides there is a risk that it might have a *negative* influence on the conflict by underlining the logics behind a polarisation in society on a religious and ethnic basis (see [foot]note no 9).'

---

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 236. The italics for emphasis are reproduced both in the original by Mahoney and Eguren and in the quotation in the Swedish report.

Footnote 9 is found after an earlier comment suggesting that accompanying only the churches would mean taking sides in the conflict. This contrasts with Younan's view that in EAPPI the world church is accompanying the Jerusalem churches, that the churches are the accompaniers and that the Palestinian church has a role to interpret its context, including Islam, to the West. It includes the comment, 'Only to stick to those who share your own religion, ethnicity etc. might have a negative influence on a conflict by strengthening a polarisation of society on a religious or ethnic ground – a problem which is of high importance in this conflict!' EAPPI has since developed in a way that puts less emphasis on inter-church cooperation than in Younan's narrative and more emphasis on accompaniment for human rights regardless of church connection.

The Swedish paper is a step towards practical conflict resolution. The logic is to support the efforts for a solution or handling of a conflict. The churches are strategic partners, but not the only partners according to this framework. It is a "third party" perspective, precisely not what Younan seemed to have in mind. The theological and biblical dimension is in danger of being lost or at least played down, and the not so small matter of inter-church solidarity is out of the window. It can be seen that there are rival narratives within EAPPI and that the place of theology was compromised from the outset.

The idea of not taking sides with the parties to conflict, accompanying those who suffer injustice without taking their side, and only taking sides against injustice - not against a primary actor in the conflict - is subtle and difficult to maintain. It has its own self-interest: to uphold the illusion of "intervening" and yet keeping one's hands clean. It is not just difficult, it may be wrong.

### **3.5 EAPPI contradictions**

The contradictions in EAPPI praxis are evident. Younan and Weiderud suggested that EAPPI consists of equal partners in a eucharistic fellowship, despite the programme including participants who do not share in such a fellowship. The Swedish paper indicates that others see partnership with the churches as a possible threat to the objectives of the programme.

Swedish EAPPI was concerned, using their framing of the conflict, that there was a contradiction at the heart of the guiding principles of EAPPI. They made it clear that it was not around the standpoint against the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories because, although that might be conceived of as partial, that stand could be taken, 'on the basis of international humanitarian law without totally identifying oneself with the struggle of the Palestinians.' As there are Israelis who are against the occupation, and there are Israeli human rights organisations, it is possible to cooperate with Israelis as well as Palestinians against the occupation. What concerned SEAPPI was the statement included in the EAPPI *Mission, Scope and Objectives*: 'supporting acts of nonviolent resistance alongside local Christian and Muslim Palestinians and Israeli peace activists.' In the frame of the SEAPPI paper active support of civil resistance was, 'not the task of a third party.'

The SEAPPI planning group decided that Swedish accompaniers would not take part in acts of nonviolent resistance and in the 'A as in Accompaniment' paper they urged EAPPI to, 'interpret its mission in the direction towards a third party's standpoint.'

To conclude comparison of Younan's 'Theological Reflection and Testimony' with 'A as in Accompaniment,' the one is thoroughly biblical and theological concluding that in this WCC programme the churches are accompanying one another as they walk with Jesus in eucharistic fellowship in a very difficult context; while the other is focused on developing an effective strategy to support human rights. If the Palestinian church is crying out their equivalent of, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us!', this becomes an indirect response when

it seeks to avoid discriminating in favour of one party.<sup>66</sup> A series of questions emerge for EAPPI praxis such as whose concerns are they addressing, whose strategy should be followed and whose context is it anyway?

Mary Motte writing on 'World Mission Conferences in the Twentieth Century' described how liberation theologies affected strategy: 'The poor became the leaders who summoned missionaries to new ways of communicating the gospel. They called for non-dominating models, they challenged those who would speak to listen first; those who would lead, to walk with, to accompany.'<sup>67</sup> This fits Younan's framing of EAPPI praxis.

A different use of accompaniment in the context of liberation theology came in Roberto S. Goizueta's *Caminemos con Jesús: Toward a Hispanic/Latino Theology of Accompaniment* which affirms the popular Catholicism of Hispanics in the USA. Goizueta in his pursuit of a "preferential option for the poor" seeks to show that popular Catholic devotion as found in Hispanic communities can be empowering. He links liberation with the aesthetics and tangible experience of prayer and celebration empowering a community in the experience of exile.

The *Historical Background* chapter will note a decision that was taken early in the WCC process that inaugurated EAPPI to change the title of the programme from monitoring (EMPPI) to accompaniment (EAPPI). The framework adopted for the new programme took account of the experience of accompaniment in other programmes, such as Peace Brigades International (PBI), but unlike PBI this new programme was to be church run and to have a biblical and theological basis.

---

<sup>66</sup> See Acts 16:9 for the Macedonian reference.

<sup>67</sup> *Mission at the Dawn of the 21st Century*, ed. by Paul Varo Martinson (Minneapolis MN: Kirk House Publishers, 1999), p. 26.

A WCC theological reflection on advocacy entitled 'Praying, speaking out and acting together', takes a view of what is at stake when Christians do not act:

'When we fail to exercise our prophetic vocation, God grieves. When we fail to intercede on behalf of the marginalized, forgotten, and abused, we abandon an opportunity for service and lose credibility in our witness to the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. Our inaction or inadequate action denies our love for God when those of us in the community have means, and see our siblings in need, but decline to offer the kind of help that would bring relief. The kingdom of God impels us to work toward justice and peace. Even the world is expecting leadership from the churches.'<sup>68</sup>

This returns to the question of whose concerns are being addressed, whose strategy should be followed and whose context is it anyway? If theological reflection is to be given a critical place at the heart of accompaniment praxis it needs to be shown that there are better reasons to do this than to maintain the credibility of Christian witness, as it might be found that accompaniment praxis is more effective if not diverted by the Churches' desire to maintain their own interests. It needs to be shown that theological reflection is not limited to self-promotion, but that the Churches themselves have a relationship to the life and ministry of Jesus Christ that allows self-criticism and where necessary self-denial. The Churches' message of the ultimate reconciliation of all things in Jesus Christ suggests that the vision for EAPPI praxis cannot be limited to those who are in eucharistic fellowship with one another, or to the world church accompanying the Jerusalem churches, but should encompass humanity beyond these limited spheres.

### **3.6 Shaping the argument**

---

<sup>68</sup> United Nations and World Council of Churches, 'Praying, speaking out and acting together: Theological Reflection on Advocacy, a joint contribution of the WCC's Global Platform for Theological Reflection and the United Nations Advocacy Week, Manhasset, New York, 20-22 November 2009', p. 10, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/folder/documents-pdf/GPTR2009report.pdf> [accessed 14 March 2017].

Accompaniment in broadest terms means “anything that accompanies”, but in the EAPPI context it also has a more specific application as “active Christian solidarity and advocacy for human rights and non-violent resistance to end the illegal occupation of Palestine.” It is argued here that Ecumenical Accompaniment could be broader in scope.

Before EAPPI there had already been WCC accompaniment praxis around the world with the intended purpose of upholding human rights. Forerunners to EAPPI have helped to shape it, including Peace Brigades International (PBI) and Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT). These have introduced perspectives that are secular in origin (PBI), or in the case of CPT from a Christian Mennonite background. There is a history of action linking human rights and Christian responsibility which includes the period when the WCC was in process of formation and is traceable even further back to the origins of the modern ecumenical movement. Actions taken with humanitarian intent have taken a variety of forms, suggesting that Ecumenical Accompaniment is not limited to EAPPI’s present theory and praxis.

Programme praxis was first described as “monitoring” and later developed into its present form of political activism. A Swedish report emphasised that third parties in a conflict should take a “nonpartisan” standpoint. The idea of taking sides with those who suffer injustice and not against a primary actor in the conflict is subtle and difficult to maintain. The Swedish report held that support of civil resistance was “not the task of a third party”, yet EAPPI took a different turn. SEAPPI urged that EAPPI should “interpret its mission in the direction of a third party’s standpoint.” EAPPI, in the assessment of this dissertation, did not take that advice seriously enough. There is a possibility that the approach eventually adopted was influenced by the Churches’ desire to maintain their own interests, such as the survival of Palestinian Christianity. Ecumenical Accompaniment belongs to humanity as a whole, not to one or other group in a conflict.

The chapter illustrates alternative approaches to accompaniment and notes that within EAPPI there have been debates about the form that accompaniment should take. There are still alternatives and EAPPI could be reshaped. If it is acknowledged that EAPPI's form of accompaniment has been at best ineffective and at worst harmful, the role of the dissertation is to point towards a renewed theology of Ecumenical Accompaniment that is more fitting, and better adjusted to changing circumstances.

## CHAPTER 4 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### 4.1 Introduction

The chapter will deal with the immediate history of EAPPI in terms of its ecumenical discussion from 2000, and soon after when intensive efforts commenced to bring it into being. It will also revisit 1948 as this date is of crucial importance historically, ecumenically and theologically for the understanding of the WCC's recent involvement in Palestine and Israel. It will provide a timeline of some key events concerning Palestine and Israel in the period between 1948 and the inauguration of EAPPI and some relevant statistical information. It shows that Palestine and Israel has been on the agenda of the WCC from the time of its 1948 Amsterdam Assembly.

### 4.2 EAPPI beginnings

Munib Younan gave a succinct and carefully crafted description of EAPPI beginnings in the opening article of *Chain Reaction*, a magazine describing the work of EAPPI in 2005:

'The EAPPI began as a concrete response to a call from the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem. Faced with the worsening situation of the illegal Occupation of Palestine in 2001, the Easter Message of the Heads of Churches urged the world-wide Christian community to take real action and not simply issue more statements of concern.'<sup>69</sup>

This rather compressed account of EAPPI origins will be expanded with help from EAPPI archives as the chapter progresses.

Three WCC policy documents related to EAPPI offer insight into how the WCC decided upon an accompaniment programme.<sup>70</sup> These documents are:

---

<sup>69</sup> Munib Younan, 'Ecumenical Accompaniment: A Human Chain of Hope for Peace and Justice,' *Chain Reaction*, 1.1, (2005), 2.

<sup>70</sup> Links to the three documents were provided under the Resources section of the EAPPI website, <http://www.eappi.org/index.php?id=4833&L=2bericht0003.htm> [accessed 9 September 2011].



- 1) A WCC Central Committee minute of February 2001 that urged the WCC General Secretary and Central Staff to take various actions, among them to,

'accompany the churches of the Holy Land and their members, and advocate their rights.'<sup>71</sup>

- 2) A resolution on an 'ecumenical response to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict' adopted by the WCC Executive Committee, Geneva of 11-14 September 2001:

"The Executive Committee...

*"welcomes and endorses the recommendations of the WCC delegation to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories including Jerusalem in June 2001 as further developed by the International Ecumenical Consultation on the Palestinian - Israeli Conflict held in Geneva, 6-7 August 2001:*

*7.1. develop an accompaniment programme that would include an international ecumenical presence based on the experience of the Christian Peacemakers Team;*  
*7.2. call upon the WCC member churches and ecumenical partners, in the context of the Decade to Overcome Violence: Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace, to focus attention in 2002 on intensive efforts to End the Illegal Occupation of Palestine, and to participate actively in coordinated ecumenical efforts in this connection;"*<sup>72</sup>

- 3) A "Statement on the ecumenical response to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the Holy Land" of September 2002" in which the Central Committee,

*'Welcomes **the positive response** of many member churches and ecumenical partners to the call to join together, in the context of the Decade to Overcome Violence: Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace (2001-2010), in an action-oriented ecumenical campaign to end the illegal occupation of Palestine, in support of reconciliation between Israelis, Palestinians and others in the Middle East and their coexistence in justice and peace, and urges others to join them in:*  
*a. Supporting the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI), as a concrete manifestation of Christian solidarity through active presence and witness of a non-violent resistance to the occupation of Palestine, working towards public awareness and policy change through advocacy;*<sup>73</sup>

---

<sup>71</sup> WCC Central Committee Potsdam, Germany (29 January to 6 February 2001), 'Report of the Public Issues Committee,' Document No. PI 6.2, <http://wcc-coe.org/wcc/who/cc2001/pi6-2-e.html#minute> [accessed 9th September 2011]. Report adopted at Potsdam.

<sup>72</sup> WCC Executive Committee (2001). 'Resolution on ecumenical response to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict,' 11-14 September, 2001 <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-commissions/international-affairs/regional-concerns/middle-east/resolution-on-ecumenical-response-to-the-palestinian-israeli-conflict.html> [accessed 9 September 2011].

<sup>73</sup> WCC Central Committee, 'Statement on the ecumenical response to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the Holy Land' (26 August to 3 September 2002), introduction, §12a, <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-commissions/international-affairs/regional-concerns/middle-east/statement-on-the-ecumenical-response-to-the-israeli-palestinian-conflict-in-the-holy-land.html> [accessed 9 September 2011].

Comparison of Younan's 2005 statement and the WCC minutes raises a question whether EAPPI was indeed a response to an Easter message of 2001. There appear to have been earlier actions that played a role in bringing EAPPI into being.<sup>74</sup> It seems that in February 2001 the Central Committee was already urging accompaniment and advocacy.

When a detailed timeline of WCC decisions and actions is examined there is no real contradiction. There are a series of Jerusalem Heads of Churches appeals and messages dating back to November 2000 (soon after the Al-Aqsa intifada began, following Ariel Sharon's visit to the Haram al Sharif/Temple Mount on 29th September 2000). There are also a series of WCC decisions and actions dating back to January 2001 in Potsdam. The Potsdam meeting followed German reunification and it was then that the Central Council initiated the "Decade to Overcome Violence: Churches seeking Peace and Reconciliation (2001-2010)". EAPPI would be one of the initial responses fleshing out that theme.

The beginnings of EAPPI can be mapped as a gradual emergence over a period of about sixteen months. The timeline is given later in this chapter. Returning to that opening statement on EAPPI in *Chain Reaction*. The programme did begin, 'as a concrete response to a call from the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem.' WCC and Heads of Churches documents testify that the call came in the form of several messages and appeals from Jerusalem in November 2000, March 2001 and April 2001 (the Heads of Churches' Easter Message that year came on 15th April).

---

<sup>74</sup> The date of the call by the Heads of the local Churches is put even later as 'the season of Easter 2002' in Munib Younan, 'Theological Reflection and Testimony,' in CCIA, WCC Faith and Order and EAPPI, *Theological Reflection on Accompaniment*, 22. This is probably an error.

The November 2000 Heads of Churches “Faithful Appeal” called for “friends of peace” to “toil together.”<sup>75</sup> The March 2001 Appeal “from the Churches of Jerusalem” urged, “come and join us in a manifestation of just peace”.<sup>76</sup> The “Easter Message” in April 2001 invited “believers worldwide” to “join in the transformation of hearts and minds.”<sup>77</sup> The essential fact is that the Heads of Churches issued persuasive appeals, including two around Easter 2001, and the WCC responded. Presenting the WCC initiative as a response to local invitation avoids the appearance that it is some kind of imposition, and it is felicitous to call it a response to an Easter message from Jerusalem, the place of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The second Palestinian intifada had begun in September 2000 and gained worldwide attention.<sup>78</sup> The Heads of Churches “Faithful Appeal” of 9th November 2000, which was acknowledged by the WCC Central Committee at Potsdam, naturally expressed concern at the violence when ‘a new Palestinian uprising burst forth in the Holy Land’:

‘On 28 September 2000, following the provocative visit of the Israeli Opposition Likud leader to the esplanade of the Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem, a new Palestinian uprising burst forth in the Holy Land. This incident itself, as much as the events that ensued, should have clearly signalled to both the Israeli and Palestinian leadership of the dire need to press on with their dialogue in addressing the whole process of peace and in resolving all outstanding issues - including the question of Jerusalem. Yet, Israel preferred to respond with an even larger recourse to force.’

Munib Younan’s statement in *Chain Reaction* does not open by referring to the intifada, or to the lack of dialogue addressing the peace process, but to the Israeli occupation as the situation needing to be addressed. Attention is thus shifted away from what some saw as Palestinian

---

<sup>75</sup> Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, ‘All thirteen Eastern and Oriental Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant Churches of Jerusalem: A Faithful Appeal,’ 9 November 2000, <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/international/conflict8.html> [accessed 6 September 2011].

<sup>76</sup> Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, ‘Appeal from the Churches of Jerusalem,’ 24 March 2001, <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/international/palestine/conflict10.html> [accessed 27 August 2011].

<sup>77</sup> Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, ‘An Easter Message of Their Beatitudes the Patriarchs and their Excellencies the Heads of Churches of Jerusalem,’ <http://www.al-bushra.org/hedchrch/ap15.htm> [accessed 8 September 2011].

<sup>78</sup> Cf. Tarik Kafala, ‘Intifada then and Now,’ BBC News Online, 8 December 2000, <[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/1061537.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/1061537.stm)>, [accessed 5 September 2011]. This report compares the Al-Aqsa intifada with that of 1987-1993.

responsibility for violence, to the State of Israel's responsibility for underlying causes: the "occupation." Instead of inviting debate about who was culpable in their 'recourse to force,' Younan wrote of, 'the worsening situation of the illegal Occupation of Palestine in 2001.' On this account the root cause of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is the "occupation".

EAPPI is not primarily a response to escalating violence but to underlying causes associated with the "occupation". There is a political awareness shown here, that when the uprising is presented as 'Al-Aqsa intifada,' i.e. a response to Ariel Sharon's visit to the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount where the Al-Aqsa Mosque is to be found, attention tends to focus on Palestinian resistance rather than on that which is being resisted, the Israeli "occupation" of Palestinian territories.

If EAPPI is truly an accompaniment programme, a partnership rather than something imposed by outsiders claiming superior insight into the complexities of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, it requires a founding narrative that emphasises the programme's origin in an invitation by local people. This is particularly needful in a region that has experienced so many colonial interventions.

It also helps the programme to emphasise that it is there to address the "occupation," as particular episodes of resistance such as the Al-Aqsa intifada come and go, whereas EAPPI has a continuing existence and needs a *raison d'être*.

As regards the territory in question, it can be noted that the phrase "Occupation of Palestine" leaves open the vexed question of what the boundaries are of Israel and/or Palestine. The facts on the ground have been continually changing, chiefly in 1948 when the Israeli War of Independence set aside UN partition proposals and approximately 78% of historic Palestine came under Israeli control; in 1967 when Israel gained control of the West Bank and Gaza Strip; in the peace accords with Egypt which conceded the Sinai peninsula under certain strict conditions; following the Oslo accords when the West Bank was divided into Areas A, B, and C;

and with the building of the “security fence” or “separation wall”. There are other areas where Israeli borders remain fluid or under dispute, such as the Golan Heights and near the border with Lebanon. The phrase “in process of formation” applies just as much to Israel and Palestine as it ever did to the World Council of Churches.<sup>79</sup>

The term “illegal Occupation” used by Munib Younan reflects a similar use of the term in the WCC Central Committee minute of September 2002. Some other statements associated with EAPPI have been more circumspect, seeking to avoid naming the occupation as such as “illegal” but paying a more forensic attention to specific illegalities under the Geneva Conventions, as regards UN resolutions and international law, and in some instances illegality under Israeli law.<sup>80</sup>

The call not simply to ‘issue more statements of concern’ echoes the intent of an international consultation in Geneva in August 2001, which asserted that, “the time for statements is over”.

Consideration of the evidence suggests that the emergence of EAPPI took place over a gestation period of about sixteen months following the outbreak of the second Palestinian intifada on 28 September 2000.

It is not surprising that some accounts of the programme’s origins present it as a simple call and response and overlook the longer process that brought it into being.

There is a longer back story that could be told of the involvement of a wide range of Christian organisations in Palestine/Israel over many decades. To give examples: Nancy Gallagher has related the story of Quakers in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, including their actions to help

---

<sup>79</sup> The phrase ‘in process of formation’ was used by the WCC prior to its inaugural Assembly in 1948.

<sup>80</sup> D. Steiman, ‘The settlements are illegal under international law.’ *The Jerusalem Post* (2013), <http://www.jpost.com/printarticle.aspx?id=336507> [accessed 21 March 2017].

refugees in 1948.<sup>81</sup> The Tantur Ecumenical Institute,<sup>82</sup> and Bethlehem University are both examples of Roman Catholic commitment to making a positive contribution to dialogue, peacemaking and the issue of Palestinian emigration.<sup>83</sup> The Vatican II document *Nostra Aetate*, and three Papal visits in 1964, 2000 and 2009 have helped to underline the significance of Vatican relationships with Israel and Palestine.

Quakers and Roman Catholics are mentioned here because each play a part in supporting EAPPI's work either through the Catholic relief agency CAFOD, or in the Quaker case by running the Britain and Ireland national coordination, even though Quakers and Roman Catholics are not official members of the WCC.

The origins of EAPPI are shown here in a timeline. This outlines the story as seen in the Heads of Churches' appeals and the documents of the WCC.

#### **A reverse timeline, February 2002 to 2000**

The timeline shown here traces the story of EAPPI origins as evidenced in the Jerusalem Heads of Churches appeals and other WCC archive documents. After this, the 1st to 2nd February 2002 consultation will be further considered for evidence of how the decision to adopt the name EAPPI came about and the reason for an "accompaniment" rather than a "monitoring" programme.

#### **1st to 2nd February 2002:**

The World Council of Churches (WCC) held a second international ecumenical working group on accompaniment in Geneva (see 6th to 7th August 2001 for an earlier one).<sup>84</sup> They

---

<sup>81</sup> Nancy Elizabeth Gallagher, *Quakers in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: The Dilemmas of NGO Humanitarian Activism* (Cairo; New York: American University in Cairo Press, 2007).

<sup>82</sup> Tantur Ecumenical Institute, [www.tantur.org](http://www.tantur.org) [accessed 10 September 2011].

<sup>83</sup> Bethlehem University, [www.bethlehem.edu](http://www.bethlehem.edu) [accessed 10 September 2011].

<sup>84</sup> See also pp. 66ff. for further discussion of this meeting.

represented organisations willing to contribute in some way to the new programme and included church officials, theologians and consultants. The programme was no longer to be called an Ecumenical Monitoring Programme and became the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI). The mission and objectives of the programme were identified. EAPPI was to be based on principles of international humanitarian and human rights law: the resolutions of the UN Security Council, General Assembly and Commission on Human Rights.

***20th November 2001 to 3rd January 2002:***

The WCC Assessment Project (WAP) for the Ecumenical Monitoring Programme in Palestine and Israel was conducted by Hans Morck, who was seconded to the WCC by DanChurchAid.

***29th October 2001:***

A WCC Press Release indicated that a number of pilot projects already underway would be connected to the EMPPI framework, and that these included a

“‘United Civilians for Peace’ campaign coordinated by Dutch development, ecumenical and peace organizations, a Church of Sweden ecumenical monitoring effort, an observer programme developed by DanChurchAid, with the Council on Interchurch Relations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark and the Ecumenical Council of Denmark, and an ecumenical programme being developed by the Middle East Forum of Church World Service (USA).’<sup>85</sup>

The same press release also referred to ‘the WCC’s prior experience with the Ecumenical Monitoring Programme in South Africa (EMPSA).’<sup>86</sup>

***20th October 2001:***

---

<sup>85</sup> WCC Press Release, PR-01-40, (29 October, 2001).

<sup>86</sup> The Ecumenical Monitoring Programme in South Africa was initiated in 1992 and continued until the 1994 elections in South Africa. The University of Witwatersrand has kept an historical record and notes that, ‘EMPSA was established as a result of a call by the South African Churches - the South African Council of Churches (SACC) and the South African Catholic Bishops Conference (SACBC) to the international church community to send teams of monitors to address the question of violence’. <http://www.historicalpapers.wits.ac.za/inventory.php?iid=8120> [accessed 4 September 2011].

The WCC Acting General Secretary and the Staff Leadership Group (SLG) approved a proposal presented by the WCC International Relations Team for the creation of the Ecumenical Monitoring Programme in Palestine & Israel (EMPPI).

***14th September 2001:***

Press Release 01-34 explains that, 'In the context of the WCC's Decade to Overcome Violence: Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace (DOV),' a resolution agreed by the WCC Executive Committee on 14th September calls on member churches and ecumenical partners, 'to focus attention in 2002 on intensive efforts to end the illegal occupation of Palestine, and to participate actively in coordinated ecumenical efforts in this connection.' It also supports 'plans to develop an international ecumenical accompaniment programme emphasizing long-term presence, solidarity, and monitoring based on current church and ecumenical experiences in the region.' The Executive Committee also called for, 'an international boycott of goods produced in the illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied territories,' as well as, 'international prayer vigils to strengthen the "chain of solidarity" with the Palestinian people.'

The full text of the resolution refers to decisions of an earlier WCC Central Committee meeting at Potsdam in February 2001.<sup>87</sup>

***11th to 14th September 2001:***

Approval in principle was given by the WCC Executive Committee for, 'an accompaniment programme that would include an international ecumenical presence, based on the experience of the Christian Peacemaker Team.'<sup>88</sup>

***6th to 7th August 2001:***

An International Ecumenical Consultation on the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict was held in Geneva.<sup>89</sup> They asked what it would mean for the world if there were no Christian

---

<sup>87</sup> WCC Executive Committee Meeting, 'Resolution on Ecumenical Response to the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict,' (Geneva, 11-14 September 2001), <http://wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/international/exco-palestine.html> [accessed 3 September 2011].

<sup>88</sup> WCC Press Release, PR-01-40, (29 October 2001). Accessed in EAPPI archives, London.



Palestinians left in the Holy Land. This is significant because it indicates that the motive for setting up the programme definitely included an inter-church dimension of the world church supporting the local churches. Speaking of a “kairos moment” the consultation indicated that the “time for statements seems to be over”. In a report the Consultation called for “coordinated ecumenical action” and made several recommendations:

'Among them is the development of a comprehensive accompaniment and solidarity programme, a cooperative response to the humanitarian crisis, coordinated advocacy and support for international law and particularly United Nations resolutions as the basis for peace negotiations, assistance to local churches, and lifting up "alternative and moderate voices" on both sides of the conflict.'<sup>90</sup>

***June 2001:***

A WCC delegation visited Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories including Jerusalem.<sup>91</sup>

***15th April 2001:***

The Common Easter Message of Their Beatitudes the Patriarchs and Their Excellencies the Heads of Churches of Jerusalem.<sup>92</sup>

***24th March 2001:***

The Heads of Churches “Appeal from the Churches of Jerusalem”.<sup>93</sup>

***4th February 2001:***

---

<sup>89</sup> The consultation of 6 to 7 August 2001 is mentioned in the WCC Executive Committee, 'Resolution on Ecumenical Response to the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict', (Geneva, 11 to 14 September 2001). <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-commissions/international-affairs/regional-concerns/middle-east/resolution-on-ecumenical-response-to-the-palestinian-israeli-conflict.html> [accessed 9 September 2011].

<sup>90</sup> WCC Office of Communication Press Release, 'What would it mean for the world if there were no Christian Palestinians left in the Holy Land?' (6 August 2001), <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/news/press/01/26pre.html> [accessed 10 September 2011].

<sup>91</sup> WCC Executive Committee (2001). 'Resolution on Ecumenical Response to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict,' (September 11 – 14 2001). <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-commissions/international-affairs/regional-concerns/middle-east/resolution-on-ecumenical-response-to-the-palestinian-israeli-conflict.html> [accessed 9 September 2011].

<sup>92</sup> Heads of Churches in Jerusalem (2001). 'An Easter Message of Their Beatitudes the Patriarchs and Their Excellencies the Heads of Churches of Jerusalem,' (15 April 2001). <http://www.al-bushra.org/hedchrch/ap15.htm> [accessed 9th September 2011].

<sup>93</sup> Heads of Churches in Jerusalem (2001). 'Appeal from the Churches of Jerusalem,' (24 March 2001). <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/international/palestine/conflict10.html> [accessed 9th September 2011].

The World Council of Churches (WCC) celebrated the international launch of the Decade to overcome Violence: Churches seeking Peace and Reconciliation (2001 - 2010) on Sunday 4th February in Berlin, Germany. The launch took place during the meeting of the WCC Central Committee in Potsdam from 29 January to 6 February 2001. According to a Press Release of the following day, General Secretary of the WCC Dr Konrad Raiser paid homage to martyred peacemakers. 'Here in this place we remember the way travelled by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who would have been 95 years old today. We think of Oscar Romero, Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi.' He concluded with a passage from Hebrews 12:1-2), 'Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a crowd of witnesses... let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.'<sup>94</sup> Among its other discussions the Potsdam Central Council meeting considered some of the ethical dilemmas presented by humanitarian interventions where nonviolent action is not possible.<sup>95</sup>

***29 January 2001:***

An historic WCC Central Committee meeting commenced in Potsdam in reunified Germany. The 158-member Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (29 January – 6 February) received an appeal dated 9 November 2000 from 'all thirteen Eastern and Oriental Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant Churches of Jerusalem.' These churches recognised the, 'duty of an occupied people to struggle against injustice in order to gain freedom,' whilst affirming that, 'non-violent means of struggle remain stronger and far more efficient.' The appeal was addressed to all Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant Churches world-wide, as well as to all friends of peace in our land, in the region and across the whole world to toil together for the establishment of a comprehensive, just and durable peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

---

<sup>94</sup> WCC Press Release, PR-01-18, (5 February 2001). <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/news/press/01/cc-releases/18pre.html> [accessed 6 September 2011].

<sup>95</sup> WCC Press Release, PR-01-14, (4 February 2001). <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/news/press/01/cc-releases/14pre.html> [accessed 6 September 2011].

That the WCC Potsdam Central Committee meeting spoke the language of accompaniment and advocacy can be seen in these five actions that came out of that meeting:

We call upon the General Secretary and staff of the Council to:

- continue their support of efforts towards a negotiated peace in the Middle East based on international law, paying special attention to the future status of Jerusalem, the right of return of Palestinian refugees, the increasing number of settlements and measures to enforce all relevant United Nations resolutions, including those regarding the withdrawal from all occupied territories - the Palestinian occupied territories, the Golan Heights and Shaba'a;
- continue to analyze and to keep the member churches regularly informed on the evolving situation;
- accompany the churches of the Holy Land and their members, and advocate their rights;
- support local Israeli and Palestinian grassroots peacebuilding efforts; and
- promote and/or cooperate with church, ecumenical and other initiatives, to strengthen broad international support for a comprehensive peace based on justice and security for all the peoples of the region.<sup>96</sup>

**9 November 2000:**

A Faithful Appeal from the Churches of Jerusalem (all thirteen Eastern and Oriental Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant Churches of Jerusalem).

The text invited churches world-wide and all 'friends of peace' to 'toil together.'

'Today, from the Holy City of Jerusalem, we cry out our desire to see peace with justice, equality and security established soon between Palestinians and Israelis on this holy land that was chosen by God to reveal His wisdom to human beings. We appeal to all Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant Churches world-wide as well as to all "friends of peace" in our land, in the region and across the whole world to toil together for the establishment of a comprehensive, just and durable peace between Israelis and Palestinians.'<sup>97</sup>

#### **4.3 The name change from EMPPI to EAPPI**

---

<sup>96</sup> WCC Central Committee Potsdam, Germany. 'Israeli-Palestinian Conflict - Minute on the situation in the Holy Land after the outbreak of the second Palestinian uprising', (29 January 2001), adopted by the Central Committee, Potsdam, Germany, (29 January to 6 February 2001). <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-commissions/international-affairs/regional-concerns/middle-east/israeli-palestinian-conflict-minute-on-the-situation-in-the-holy-land-after-the-outbreak-of-the-second-palestinian-uprising.html> [accessed 25 August 2011].

<sup>97</sup> Heads of Churches in Jerusalem. 'All thirteen Eastern and Oriental Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant Churches of Jerusalem: A Faithful Appeal,' (9 November 2000). <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/international/conflict8.html> [accessed 6th September 2011].

The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme was initially called the Ecumenical Monitoring Programme. 'Monitoring' became 'Accompaniment' as a result of discussion at the ecumenical working group (the second of its kind) held in Geneva from 1st to 2nd February 2002.<sup>98</sup> The group consisted of 41 participants, 'from WCC member churches and ecumenical partners in Jerusalem, Sweden, The Netherlands, England, Scotland, Germany, Norway, Denmark, France, Belgium, Switzerland, South Africa, USA and Canada.'<sup>99</sup> Among the consultants present were representatives of the Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) and Peace Brigades International (PBI).<sup>100</sup> Liam Mahoney of PBI had published on the subject of international accompaniment for the protection of human rights, or "protection by presence".<sup>101</sup> One of the attendees at the 1st to 2nd February meeting, Kathy Bergen, wrote a report of the outcome for Quakers.<sup>102</sup> She noted that the name change came after much discussion and that the mission of the programme was to be, 'accompaniment of Palestinians and Israelis in non-violent actions and concerted advocacy efforts to end the occupation.' Rick Polhamus from CPT was among those who recommended framing the programme as 'solidarity/accompaniment' rather than 'observation/monitoring.' Floresca Karanasou from Quaker Peace and Social Witness recalls that whilst there was agreement on the term "accompaniment" there was some resistance to

---

<sup>98</sup> WCC, EAPPI Working Group Meeting 2, (Geneva; 1 - 2 February 2002). Manuscript notes of the meeting are held in the EAPPI archives at Friends' House, Euston, London. (Ref. P90100895).

<sup>99</sup> WCC, 'EAP background' Paper, <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/international/palestine/background.html> [accessed 19th September 2002].

<sup>100</sup> Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) Palestine Projects, <http://www.cpt.org/work/palestine> [accessed 6 September 2011], gave this description of their mission in Hebron and the South Hebron hills: 'CPT Palestine is a faith-based organization that supports Palestinian-led, nonviolent, grassroots resistance to the Israeli occupation and the unjust structures that uphold it. By collaborating with local Palestinian and Israeli peacemakers and educating people in our home communities, we help create a space for justice and peace.' As of 2017 CPT has projects in Hebron, Palestine; Barrancabermeja, Columbia; Suleimani, Iraqi Kurdistan; and Toronto based Indigenous Peoples Solidarity.

<sup>101</sup> Mahony and Eguren, *Unarmed Bodyguards*.

<sup>102</sup> Kathy Bergen. 'A Report of the Consultation organized by the World Council of Churches, Geneva, Switzerland, February 1 & 2, 2002,' (Geneva: WCC), p. 2. Found in EAPPI archives held at Friends House, Euston, London.

the word “accompaniers” as a term to describe those engaging in accompaniment. Bergen reported that, accompaniment would include, 'monitoring and reporting on violations of human rights and international humanitarian law; offering protection through non-violent presence; supporting acts of non-violent resistance alongside local Christian and Muslim Palestinians and Israeli peace activists; and engaging in public policy advocacy.' The list of programme objectives included:

- exposing the violence of the occupation;
- ending the brutality, humiliation and violence against civilians;
- constructing a strong global advocacy network;
- ensuring the respect of human rights and international humanitarian law;
- influencing public opinion in home countries and affecting foreign policy on the Middle East in order to end occupation and create a viable Palestinian state;
- expressing solidarity with Palestinian and Israeli peace activists and empowering local Palestinian communities/churches;
- being an active witness that an alternative, non-violent struggle for justice and peace is possible to end the illegal occupation of Palestine.

Karanasou said that it was actually thanks to Liam Mahoney that the term “accompaniment” was used. He spoke about how accompaniment is done and the difficulties there might be in setting up a new programme. Other participants were keen on the idea for “spiritual reasons” and some understood the term in its basic meaning of being there with people and enhancing the solidarity aspect. She explained “spiritual reasons” to mean that there were 'theologians, ministers and so forth [who] were working in various capacities in the churches and for them it was not enough just to listen to Liam Mahoney, who is not a practising Christian or a theologian, define accompaniment. They wanted to give accompaniment their own understanding and thought about it, so it was actually something that they defined themselves.' The agreed list of objectives came to define what accompaniment would mean for the programme. From an administrator’s point of view the programme at this stage lacked

a logical framework, there were broad objectives but the details had to be worked out as time went on.<sup>103</sup>

Bergen reported that,

'[...] intense discussion at the consultation centred around whether this programme would be as some termed it 'a peacekeeping mission' or 'a peacemaking mission'. A peacekeeping mission would focus on the role of internationals observing and recording what each had seen and experienced and then reporting this to their home constituencies, including their own elected representatives. A peacemaking mission would focus on participating in non-violence, direct action alongside Palestinians and Israelis in resisting the Israeli occupation. This would involve different actions at different points in time. It was brought to everyone's attention that monitoring and recording is already being done by competent Palestinian and Israelis human rights organizations and TIPH (Temporary International Presence in Hebron).<sup>104</sup> What is really needed was an international presence along the lines of CPT (Christian Peacemaker Teams) who monitor, observe, report (to a home constituency), and intervene when necessary. At the end of the discussion, the group did not wish to separate internationals into participating in one or the other categories. Instead, it was felt that each person participating in this programme, would be given the option to participate in activities at the level of risk he/she would feel comfortable in doing so.'

Two aspects to the debate have been noted. Karanasou noticed that some wished to give accompaniment a 'spiritual' slant. From that perspective theology appears to be an added extra, rather than playing a critical role, its position compromised from the outset. The point is not whether a theological construction can be put upon accompaniment, but whether theology really contributes anything that is critical to shaping the on-going life of the programme.

Bergen's notes suggest that there were reasons quite apart from theology why EAPPI should be regarded as an accompaniment programme, and this was the practical question of whether

---

<sup>103</sup> F. Karanasou, interview recorded at Friends House, Euston, London, (9 August 2009).

<sup>104</sup> Temporary International Presence in the City of Hebron, [www.tiph.org](http://www.tiph.org) [accessed 5 September 2011]. The TIPH is an international civilian observer mission. The TIPH assists the parties in the normalisation of the situation in the city and reports on their efforts and the breaches of the agreements on Hebron and international law. TIPH reports to the Palestinian and Israeli authorities and to the six member-countries: Norway, Italy, Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey. The first call for international observers in Hebron was made by the UN Security Council, (SC 904), following the massacre in the Ibrahimi Mosque/Cave of Machpela on 25 February 1994. TIPH observers started patrolling in 1994 after an agreement signed between Israel and the PLO.

it is engaged in peacekeeping or peacemaking. "Peacekeepers" such as TIPH in Hebron are known for writing reports i.e. monitoring rather than intervening. "Peacemakers" implies active intervention.<sup>105</sup> The important point for theology is missed altogether i.e. whether it is capable of shaping praxis through its critical input. An existing tradition and framework of accompaniment was taken up that relied on the experience and theoretical framing provided by Mahony and Eguran.

#### **4.4 The broader historical setting**

##### **The significance of 1948**

The World Council of Churches officially began, having completed a long period of being 'in process of formation' in 1948. After delay caused by the Second World War its inaugural Assembly went ahead at Amsterdam (22<sup>nd</sup> August to 4<sup>th</sup> September 1948) with a great sense of rejoicing.<sup>106</sup> This momentous event for its initial 147 member-churches brought together two existing ecumenical movements; Life and Work, and Faith and Order.<sup>107</sup>

There were a number of theological heavyweights at Amsterdam in 1948, people like Karl Barth, Reinhold Niebuhr and John Foster Dulles whose comments on the 1948 Assembly

---

<sup>105</sup> Cf. Christian Peacemaker Teams, [www.cpt.org](http://www.cpt.org) [accessed 21 March 2017], where CPT claims that, 'We believe we can transform war and occupation, our own lives, and the wider Christian world through: the nonviolent power of God's truth; partnership with local peacemakers; bold action.'

<sup>106</sup> Norman Goodall, 'WCC Amsterdam 1948', unpublished tape recording, (6 May 1983). Having attended the Amsterdam Assembly in 1948, Norman Goodall, when speaking to theological students training for United Reformed ministry at Mansfield College, Oxford, impressed upon them the great sense of rejoicing that was experienced at Amsterdam when the WCC was formed. He reiterated this in a recorded interview. See also Norman Goodall, *Second Fiddle: recollections and reflections*. (London: SPCK, 1979).

<sup>107</sup> WCC, Frequently Asked Questions, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/about-us/faq#how-many-member-churches-does-the-wcc-have-now-> [accessed 19 March 2017]. WCC states that at its inauguration there were '147, mostly Protestant, who came predominantly from Europe and North America.' As to current membership, 'The WCC currently has 348 member churches [...]. Together, these churches represent more than 500 million Christians (though it is important to note that different churches have different ways of calculating membership). Today's member churches come from more than 110 countries on all continents and include Orthodox, Anglican, Protestant, United and other churches. A majority of member churches now come from the South.'

theme, “Man’s Disorder and God’s Design” bear some comparison with theological debates today. For example, there was a notable exchange between Barth and Niebuhr played out in the pages of the *Christian Century* magazine. Characteristically Karl Barth questioned why 'God's Design' did not come before 'Man's Disorder.' The priority of theological reflection, or the lack of it, is a key question for this dissertation.

From the outset the WCC took an interest in the "Holy Land." Earlier the same year, on 14 May 1948 the State of Israel had been declared. The British Mandate had come to an end and this became a moment of immense significance for Jews who had experienced near annihilation in the Shoah (the Nazi holocaust). It was a moment of triumph, the establishment of a Jewish State.

For Palestinians it was a disaster, and 15 May has since been commemorated as *Nakhba* day. It was characterised by the experience of military defeat, dispossession, displacement and, for many, a new refugee status. "*Nakhba*" or "catastrophe" describes this experience.

The partition of Palestine and the appearance on the world scene of the newly formed State of Israel had brought about a refugee crisis of massive proportions, though Israeli and Palestinian accounts of the causes of that crisis vary. An appeal was made by Christian leaders in the Middle East that brought a response from the WCC.

In retrospect the suffix “in process of formation” need never have been dropped from the title of the World Council of Churches. It could also be applied to the State of Israel, and to Palestinian hopes of nationhood.

The ending of the British Mandate led to the partition of Palestine, though not following the lines tabled by the United Nations. Palestinians did not accept this, and Israelis followed an approach that has continued since, that of establishing “facts on the ground.” The initial result of Israeli conquest in the “War of Independence” was control of approximately 78% of the



territory of historic Palestine. The Gaza Strip was then under Egyptian control, and the West Bank under Jordanian control. For Jews it was a huge achievement to have gained a homeland, even if the challenges of establishing a new State were not only huge but met by determined opposition.

The Palestinian “*Nakhba*” or “catastrophe” presented initially as the refugee problem. They were experiencing in Palestine some of the same problems of displacement and dispossession that Jews had experienced in Europe. It was no small problem. According to some accounts, as many as 600,000 to 760,000 Palestinians left their homes and became refugees during the Arab-Israeli war in 1948. They moved either to other parts of Palestine such as the West Bank and Gaza Strip, or to other nations, mostly Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. Palestinian accounts describe it as a planned expulsion. Israeli accounts tend to suggest that it was voluntary on the part of the Palestinians. The UN accounts for four million Palestinian refugees. The Palestinian Authority claims the number to be five million.<sup>108</sup>

#### **A parallel between 1948 and EAPPI's inauguration**

Since in 1948 there was a call by Christian leaders followed by a WCC response, a parallel to EAPPI's foundation narrative, it is of interest to compare the 1948 response. This is part of the resolution proposed at the Amsterdam Assembly by the Committee on Reconstruction and Interchurch Aid:

'The World Council of Churches, recalling that the origin of its refugee division was the concern of the churches for Jewish refugees, notes with especially deep concern the recent extension of the refugee problem to the Middle East by the flight from their homes in the Holy Land of not less than 350,000 Arab and other refugees.

It receives, with an urgent sense of its Christian duty, the appeal which originally came from Christian leaders in Palestine. It records appreciation of the prompt co-operation offered by the UN mediator in Palestine with the projects of relief initiated by the

---

<sup>108</sup> B. Morris, *The birth of the Palestinian refugee problem revisited*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

churches and interchurch bodies, and in commending the actions in this field already taken.'<sup>109</sup>

Both in 1948 when there was a huge refugee crisis, and in 2001 during the Al-Aqsa intifada (which began in 2000) and because of the conditions that provoked it, an appeal from Palestinian Christian leaders evoked a WCC response. In both cases the response was not limited to inter-church aid but included action to help the wider population regardless of religious affiliation. Supporting the local Churches meant supporting the general population, a response to humanitarian need rather than just the local Christians.

#### **Some historical events between 1948 and the formation of EAPPI**

- |      |  |
|------|--|
| 1947 | UN Resolution 181 called for Palestine to be divided into a Jewish state and an Arab state with a 'corpus separatum' for Jerusalem and Bethlehem.  |
| 1948 | The British Mandate ended, and Israel declared independence, 'based on freedom, justice and peace [...] complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants [...] offer peace and good neighbourliness to our neighbours.' <sup>110</sup>              |
| 1948 | Arab states declared war against Israel, Israel won that war and gained a total of 77% of British Mandate Palestine. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians became displaced persons and refugees and were not allowed to return to Israel or the West Bank. <sup>111</sup> |
| 1948 | UN Resolution 194 supported the right of return/compensation for the refugees.   |
| 1950 | Extensive confiscation of Arab property took place based on the Israeli Absentee Property Law. Right of return was extended to all Jews worldwide, and there followed large scale Jewish emigration to Israel.   |
| 1964 | Arab states supported the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).  |

---

<sup>109</sup> WCC Amsterdam Assembly, 'Concerns of the churches - The emergence of Israel as a state.' Extract from Report of Committee IV', (1 August 1948).

<sup>110</sup> Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Declaration of Independence', 14th May 1948. <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/declaration%20of%20establishment%20of%20state%20of%20israel.aspx> [accessed 24 March 2017].

<sup>111</sup> According to Benny Morris, Arab officials spoke of a total of 900,000 or one million Palestinian Arabs who became refugees. Israeli spokesmen spoke of a total of 'about 520,000. UNWRA put the figure at 726,0000.' See B. Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 602.

1967	Six Day War resulted in Israel occupying the West Bank and Gaza, Sinai and Golan Heights, and Israeli law was enforced over Palestinian East Jerusalem.
1967	UN Resolution 242 called for Israel's withdrawal from occupied land.
1968	Jewish settlement spread into the newly occupied territories.
1973	Yom Kippur War began on October 22nd when Egypt launched an attack on Israeli forces east of the Suez Canal at the same time as the Syrian army attacked Israelis in the Golan Heights. The tide turned in Israel's favour. A ceasefire was sponsored by the USA and the USSR. UN Security Council resolution 340 called on all forces to withdraw to their October 22nd positions.
1974	PLO President Arafat addressed the UN, which granted the PLO observer status in 1975.
1978	Camp David Summit of Israeli Prime Minister Begin and US President Carter.
1978 and 1982-85	Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Sabra and Shatilla massacre 1982.
1979	Israeli Prime Minister Begin and Egyptian President Sadat sign a peace treaty at the White House in Washington DC, hosted by President Jimmy Carter, on March 26th.
1987-93	Palestinian intifada (shaking off) against the occupation.
1988	Emergence of Hamas as resistance to occupation. The PLO recognises Israel.
1993-95	Oslo Conference agrees interim self-government for the PLO and a transitional plan divided the West Bank into Areas A, B and C.
2000	Camp David Summit involving Israeli Prime Minister Barak and US President Clinton.
2000	Israeli soldiers visit the Haram el Sharif/Temple Mount with Ariel Sharon and this triggers a second intifada, this time with more violence (the 'Al Aqsa' intifada).
2001	The Mitchell Report from the US calls for an immediate ceasefire and complete freeze on the building of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
2002	The Arab League offers to recognise Israel and asks for the end of the occupation, and this is not taken up by Israel.
2002	Israel begins construction of a 'security fence,' confiscating additional Palestinian land for the building of the wall.

#### **The 2008 Census**

In Palestine and Israel demographics continue to be contentious because census figures are used to try to justify claims to the land. The UK *Guardian* newspaper reported census findings in 2008 that there were 3.76 million Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem up from 2.89 million over a period of ten years. In the same period Israel's population grew 5.17% to 7 million. In the West Bank there were 2 million Palestinians and 250,000 Israelis.<sup>112</sup>

## 4.5 Conditions according to other organisations

### A UN perspective on conditions in the West Bank and Gaza

A report of 6th July 2015 gives a United Nations perspective on economic conditions in the West Bank and Gaza and highlights the growth in Israeli settlements, the continuance of the blockage of the Gaza Strip, and the unilateral redefinition of internationally recognised borders.

'6. Israeli settlements in the West Bank continued to expand, and the number of settlers has quadrupled since the Oslo Accords. Today, settlers outnumber Palestinians in Area C (61 per cent of West Bank area), which includes the most valuable Palestinian natural resources. Overall, 341,000 Israeli settlers live in 235 settlements and outposts in Area C, compared to 300,000 Palestinians (United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 2014a). Settlers' violence against Palestinians and their productive assets continued, with 9,333 productive trees destroyed or vandalized in 2014. The violence escalated in 2015; in January alone, another 5,600 trees across the West Bank were uprooted or vandalized (OCHA, 2015).

7. Towards the end of 2014, the movement of Palestinian people and goods in the West Bank was hindered by 490 barriers installed by Israel, including checkpoints, roadblocks, trenches and the Separation Barrier, which runs into the Occupied Palestinian Territory and unilaterally redefines the borders away from the internationally recognized Green Line (OCHA, 2014b). Gaza remained under a blockade that isolates it from the world and its traditional markets in the West Bank and Israel, which absorbed some 85 per cent of its exports before the blockade.'<sup>113</sup>

---

<sup>112</sup> T. O'Loughlin, 'Census finds Palestinian population up by 30%', *The Guardian* <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/feb/11/israelandthepalestinians.population> [accessed 18 March 2017].

<sup>113</sup> United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 'Report on UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people: Developments in the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.' (UN Trade and Development Board, Geneva, 14 - 25 September 2015). Ref: TD/B/62/3, Item 10(b), [http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/tdb62d3\\_en.pdf](http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/tdb62d3_en.pdf) [accessed 19 March 2017].

Seen from an EAPPI perspective, the conditions in the West Bank and Gaza continue to deteriorate. It is not easy to know whether that means there is an even greater need for accompaniment, or that EAPPI should conclude that although it has particular impacts in local situations it is not affecting overall outcomes for Palestine and Israel. EAPPI needs the critical friend of theological reflection to help it to face the question of whether it is sustaining itself rather than sustaining an emancipatory dynamic.

### **B'tselem on conditions in Area C**

According to the Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Palestinian Territories, B'tselem:

'Some 60 percent of West Bank lands have been classified as "Area C" meaning they are under full and exclusive Israeli control. Area C is home to an estimated 180,000 Palestinians and includes the major land reserves for any development of the entire West Bank. Israel prohibits Palestinian construction and development on some 70 percent of Area C, using various rationales to prohibit construction, such as "state lands" or "firing zones." The Israeli authorities' planning and construction policy almost completely ignore the needs of the local population: it refuses to recognize most of the villages in the area or draw up plans for them, prevents the expansion and development of Palestinian communities, demolishes homes and does not allow the communities to hook up to infrastructure. Thousands of inhabitants live under the constant threat of expulsion for living in alleged firing zones or "illegal" communities.'<sup>114</sup>

The effect of the division into Areas A, B, and C is serious for the whole of the West Bank, having a very limiting effect on the occupied Palestinian territories and their population as a whole and is a serious obstacle to coherent government.

## **4.6 The Christian population of Israel**

---

<sup>114</sup> B'tselem, 'Acting the Landlord: Israel's Policy in Area C, the West Bank,' Report Summary, (June 2013) [http://www.btselem.org/press\\_releases/20130605\\_area\\_c\\_report](http://www.btselem.org/press_releases/20130605_area_c_report) [accessed 24 March 2017].

Benny Morris indicates that 'by the end of 1947, there were one and a quarter million Arabs (about 1.1 million Muslims and 150,000 Christians).<sup>115</sup>

Sami Geraisy offers statistical tables in an article on socio-demographic characteristics originally published as *The Holy Land: Home of Christianity*.<sup>116</sup> These indicate that according to the Government Statistical Year Book of 1990, 2.9% of the population of Israel were Christians in 1949 amounting to 34,000, and by 1989 the figure was 2.3% or 107,000.

It appears that the percentage of Christian adherents has remained consistently low throughout the period indicated here. If there is a threat to the continued existence of Christianity in the lands of its birth, it is a threat that has existed throughout the second half of the 20th century and into the 21st.

#### **4.7 Resolution on ecumenical response to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict**

The resolution adopted by the WCC Executive in 2001 is given here in full. In particular section 5 indicates that the WCC aimed both to express solidarity with churches and Christian communities, and also to protect vulnerable communities in Palestine and bring an end to hostilities. It presents the 'ecumenical action to protect vulnerable communities in Palestine' as implementation of Central Committee recommendations made in Potsdam.

##### **'Adopted by the Executive Committee, Geneva, 11-14 September 2001.**

The Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches, meeting in Geneva, 11-14 September 2001,

---

<sup>115</sup> Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 18.

<sup>116</sup> *Christians in the Holy Land*, ed. by M. Prior and W. Taylor (London: World of Islam Festival Trust, 1994), p. 48.

1. *alarmed and dismayed* by the escalation of violence in the Holy Land since the Central Committee adopted its last "Minute on the Situation in the Holy Land After the Outbreak of the Second Palestinian Uprising," in Potsdam, February 2001;

2. *expresses its profound condolences* to all the victims of the conflict, and especially to the families of those who have been killed in both Palestine and Israel;

3. *recalls and reaffirms* the policies of the World Council of Churches on the pursuit of a just peace in the Middle East, and for the status of Jerusalem; and its commitment to active dialogue among Christians, Muslims and Jews;

4. *reiterates* its appeal to the parties directly involved and to the international community to bring an end to aggressive acts and the violence that have again overtaken the Holy Land and threaten international peace and security;

5. *welcomes and affirms* the initiatives undertaken by the General Secretary and staff of the World Council of Churches in implementing the recommendations of the Central Committee in Potsdam by promoting an active, coordinated ecumenical response to end the illegal occupation of Palestine; expressing solidarity with the Churches and Christian Communities most directly affected; and providing auspices for member churches to develop a plan of concerted non-violent ecumenical action to protect vulnerable communities in Palestine and to promote an end to the hostilities;

6. *requests **the WCC General Secretary and staff*** to continue and intensify their facilitating and coordinating role for ecumenical advocacy, networking, communication and active solidarity with the victims of the conflict;

7. *welcomes and endorses* the recommendations of the WCC delegation to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories including Jerusalem in June 2001 as further developed by the International Ecumenical Consultation on the Palestinian - Israeli Conflict held in Geneva, 6-7 August 2001:

7.1. *develop an accompaniment programme* that would include an international ecumenical presence based on the experience of the Christian Peacemakers Team;

7.2. *call upon the WCC member churches and ecumenical partners*, in the context of the Decade to Overcome Violence: Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace, to focus attention in 2002 on intensive efforts to End the Illegal Occupation of Palestine, and to participate actively in coordinated ecumenical efforts in this connection;

7.3. *consider the organization of an International Conference on the Illegal Occupation of Palestine*, bringing together representatives of the churches, ecumenical partner organizations, competent international bodies, scholars and experts in 2002 as part of the special ecumenical focus on efforts to End the Occupation of Palestine;

7.4. *call for* an international boycott of goods produced in the illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied territories;

7.5. *call on member churches and Christians* to

7.5.1. *join in non-violent acts of resistance* to the destruction of Palestinian properties and to forced evictions of people from their homes and lands; and

7.5.2. *join in international prayer vigils* to strengthen the "chain of solidarity" with the Palestinian people;

8. *calls upon member churches and ecumenical funding partners* to respond as a matter of urgency to this appeal, and to make available the necessary resources for the WCC to be able to fulfill its tasks and responsibilities in relationship to the proposed coordinated ecumenical action plan;

9. *requests the General Secretary* to bring the present resolution to the attention of member churches, ecumenical partners, competent UN bodies and specialized agencies, regional intergovernmental bodies and to Governments of their member states, and to make a progress report on implementation to the next meeting of the Executive Committee.<sup>117</sup>

#### **4.8 Statement on Israel's obligations as occupying power**

In September 2001 the WCC Commission of the Churches on International Affairs under whose umbrella came EMPPI (later EAPPI) was already promoting 'non-violent acts of resistance' including an international boycott of goods produced in the illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied territories.' The WCC was already in interventionist mode.

'As people of faith we uphold and defend the sanctity of all life, both Palestinian and Israeli and cannot remain silent in the face of suffering, insecurity and fear of both peoples.

Therefore we reiterate the WCC Executive Committee resolution of September 14, 2001 which calls the WCC member churches, ecumenical partners and Christians around the world, in the context of the Decade to Overcome Violence: Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace (2001-2010), to focus attention in 2002 on intensive efforts to End the Illegal Occupation of Palestine, and to participate actively in coordinated ecumenical efforts, among others, to support the newly established Ecumenical Monitoring Programme in Palestine and Israel (EMPPI); to join in non-violent acts of resistance to the destruction of Palestinian properties and to forced evictions of people from their homes and lands; an international boycott of goods produced in the illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied territories; and in

---

<sup>117</sup> WCC Executive Committee, 'Resolution on Ecumenical Response to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict', (11 September 2001), <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-commissions/international-affairs/regional-concerns/middle-east/resolution-on-ecumenical-response-to-the-palestinian-israeli-conflict.html> [accessed 25th August 2011].



international prayer vigils to strengthen the "chain of solidarity" with the Palestinian people, and for a just peace in the Middle East.'<sup>118</sup>

#### 4.9 Some conclusions

It is evident that from the outset there were competing narratives concerning the nature and purpose of the EAPPI programme and that these do not sit comfortably within the whole. The experience of "cognitive dissonance" mentioned in the *Introduction* as a motive for this study is justified by the documentary evidence.

The intense debate that took place around the question of whether it should be a monitoring or an accompaniment programme can be interpreted in different ways (cf. Bergen and Karanasou). Either it can be seen as peacekeeping versus peacemaking, with accompaniment associated with a more active role using field strategies developed by Mahony and Eguren; or it can be seen as theologians trying to claim accompaniment as a biblical/theological paradigm and finding analogies for accompaniment in scriptures. Even before this debate the WCC was set to interventionist mode.

If the "call and response" narrative is accepted as EAPPI's founding story, whereby the programme is to be seen as world church action in response to a call by Jerusalem Heads of Churches, then what happened at the meeting in February 2002 can be seen as ecclesiological solidarity action mutating into something quite different: an interventionist approach styled as 'principled impartiality.' It is a matter of judgement whether nonviolent direct action and actions such as the boycott recommended by the CCIA meets the requirements of impartiality or does in fact take sides.

---

<sup>118</sup> WCC Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA), 'Statement on Israel's obligations as occupying power: Issued by the CCIA on the occasion of the Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, (Geneva, 5 December 2001)', <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-commissions/international-affairs/regional-concerns/middle-east/statement-on-israels-obligations-as-occupying-power.html> [accessed 25 August 2011].

The framing as interchurch solidarity is easier to justify than the hybrid EAPPI became, with its two contradictory narratives side by side. When both narratives are kept the non-partiality principle becomes tragi-comic. EAPPI is left both trying to show solidarity with an interested party in the conflict, the churches, and also trying not to be seen to be taking sides. As others were already at work in the context it was not easy to justify an intervention of the kind being envisaged without the excuse of ecclesiological solidarity.

EAPPI praxis having been established with the theological aspect already compromised, a more effective role for theology is needed, not one that amounts to window dressing for a secular project masquerading as a thoroughly Christian one. A theology that is playing second fiddle is no theology at all. To restore its place requires identifying a critical function for theological reflection, a proposition that will be explored in the *Theological Reflection* chapter.

#### **4.10 Shaping the argument**

An examination of WCC archives has helped to iron out some inconsistencies in accounts of EAPPI origins. The relationship between the programme and a series of appeals by Jerusalem Heads of Churches is less direct than sometimes claimed, but there were such appeals and EAPPI has used them to legitimise its intervention across borders. Framing EAPPI accompaniment as a response to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories masks alternative causes such as concern about the heightened crisis of the second Palestinian intifada, or the lack of dialogue between parties to the conflict. Described as a programme that has intervened by invitation, masks the possibility that it is yet another in a long series of colonial-style invitation by outsiders who claim to know best. The pressure of self-justification may prevent EAPPI from seeing itself through the lenses that others are using.

A timeline of EAPPI's emergence reveals that the WCC Central Committee at Potsdam received an appeal from Jerusalem Heads of Churches in November 2000, rather than waiting for an

Easter letter in 2001. EAPPI origins are connected to the launch at Potsdam of the Decade to Overcome Violence (2001-2010).

Handwritten Quaker archive reports of a working group in February 2002 indicate that the programme emerged as a coalition of many interested parties joining to inaugurate what was initially billed as a “monitoring” programme. The influence of representatives of Peace Brigades International and Christian Peacemaker Teams is clear from informal notes of the meeting. There were debates around whether the main purpose was “peacekeeping” or “peacemaking”, with the latter view favoured by activists who wanted something more than observation and recording. It is important for the argument of this dissertation that it was not inevitable that accompaniment should take a turn towards political activism. There are still alternatives, as there were then. One alternative was pursued by the WCC in 1948, when a refugee division began to respond to humanitarian need of Jewish and Arab and other refugees (an inclusive humanitarian response). Such a model could be followed again.

From an EAPPI perspective there is a continuing deterioration of conditions for Palestinians and this seems to demand that the programme continue. This overlooks EAPPI’s failure to achieve its objective to “end the occupation.” In response EAPPI should either cease or reframe its theology and praxis. The dissertation follows the latter alternative.

EAPPI can be seen as an initiative of the WCC with its roots in the Potsdam Central Committee meeting of 2001 and a subsequent Executive meeting later in the same year, drawing on the experience of the Christian Peacemaker Teams. When EMPPI turned into EAPPI, the programme became a hybrid with reduced emphasis on non-partial third-party intervention, and more emphasis on a form of political activism. This move has caused some lasting contradictions that need to be addressed. EAPPI has become a largely secular project masquerading as a thoroughly Christian one, and as such it needs a renewed theology and praxis.



## CHAPTER 5            FIELDWORK

### 5.1 Introduction

The project turns to its qualitative study phase, and the task of collating and interpreting data collected from relevant witness sources in order to help set EAPPI in context, and to build an account of its work at a particular time, a snapshot of EAPPI praxis.

The World Council of Churches describes EAPPI as a ministry of “solidarity and presence” as part of the campaign '*End the Illegal Occupation of Palestine: Support a Just Peace in the Middle East* that was launched in the Decade to Overcome Violence.'<sup>119</sup> A key question is to ask whether EAPPI does what it claims to do, whether it is consistent with its own guiding principles, for example:

‘The EAPPI is based on principles of international humanitarian and human-rights law, including resolutions of the UN Security Council, General Assembly and Commission on Human Rights. One of the EAPPI guiding principles is 'principled impartiality', the EAPPI Code of Conduct states: '*We do not take sides in this conflict and we do not discriminate against anyone but we are not neutral in terms of principles of human rights and international humanitarian law. We stand faithfully with the poor, the oppressed and the marginalized. We want to serve all parties in this conflict in a fair and unbiased manner in word and action.*'<sup>120</sup>

The *Accompaniment traditions* chapter has already queried whether it is possible to be both an ecclesiological solidarity programme and also to intervene without taking sides. There is a tension between these two tasks that needs to be explored further.

At the centre of attention in this chapter is a collection of twelve interview transcripts prepared from audio recordings made on location in November and December 2009 in all six

---

<sup>119</sup> WCC, *Just Peace Companion* (WCC, Geneva, 2011), section 28.

<sup>120</sup> EAPPI, <http://www.eappi.org/index.php?id=4565> [accessed 13th June 2011].

locations where EAPPI was then working: Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Hebron, Tulkarm, Jayyus and Yanoun. The sample represents 50% of those who were on active service as Ecumenical Accompaniers (EAs) at the time. The choice of this time frame was expedient, coinciding with an opportunity for sabbatical study.

The EA teams were visited in the six locations, with the prior help and agreement of the EAPPI Jerusalem Office, and with the purpose of interviewing two EAs in each place (the EAs were organised into six teams of four); and to see examples of how accompaniment work was being carried out at that time. This was achieved by making a series of daytime journeys by public transport and on foot from a starting point at the Tantur Ecumenical Institute, equipped with a digital voice recorder.

The sample of EAs included people from France, Germany, Norway, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. All communicated in English, which is the *lingua franca* of the EAPPI programme. Five were men and seven were women. Two were black and ten were white. Their ages ranged from 25 to 68 with three under 30, four between 30 and 60 and five over 60. All but four of the twelve admitted to being educated to university degree level or higher. Two were doctors, one of medicine and the other of social science. Occupations included the church, medicine, social work, teaching, translation work, journalism, retail work and a private detective. Two said that they were unemployed prior to being an EA, two that they were retired. First languages included Afrikaans, German, English, French, Norwegian, Swedish, and Zulu. There were no Arabic speakers among them (most were attempting to learn a few words and phrases of Arabic to use with their Palestinian contacts). They relied on local people to act as translators, or where possible another member of their team who spoke some Arabic. English is widely understood by the local population in the West Bank and Israel, though in the northern West Bank, where there is less contact with internationals, English is not so well known. The two EAs who had some French and German found that they could make some use of these languages. In Jayyus there were

said to be locals who had picked up some Swedish, due to repeated contacts with Swedish EAs.

Several types of evidence have been collected and drawn upon to enable comment on the core material: interview transcripts with others associated with the programme; notes made at the time of the visits; online articles by EAs that have been vetted by programme coordinators (an example of which is given as an appendix); accounts by programme staff and supporters; interviews with Palestinians; accounts not directly connected with the programme that frame the Israeli/Palestinian conflict in different ways. Drawing on wider sources of evidence has the effect of ‘triangulation’ – pinpointing the significance and legitimacy of views and comments by seeing them through the eyes of different witnesses.

It is intended to supply a ‘thick’ account of accompaniment practice brought about by visiting in the field and reflecting on the experience. As well as reflecting on the nature of ecumenical accompaniment, the interviewees were prompted to offer their own biblical/theological reflections on the task, and this would reveal that although serving a Christian programme they were not exclusively Christian.

The overall purpose of this project is critical theological reflection on accompaniment, and the 30 interview questions (which can be seen listed in an appendix at the end of this chapter) focussed on three main aspects:

- a) where the EAs came from and some standard questions about who they were – in reporting results the names of EAs are kept confidential;
- b) their understanding of “ecumenical” and “accompaniment”;
- c) their theological/spiritual reflection as participants in a Christian (World Council of Churches) programme.

The core interviews were coded using Nvivo software under three simple headings, or nodes. These are “Stories,” “Framings,” and “Dissonances.” The “Stories” node collated the stronger stories about accompaniment that were told by those interviewed.

“Framings” identifies some of the characteristic vocabulary used by interviewees when describing the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and the work they were doing. In this section some words and phrases have been highlighted by boldening them.

“Dissonances” are observations by interviewees that look at accompaniment from an angle that the researcher found to be unexpected. Under these nodes certain themes emerged which are illustrated by excerpts from transcripts. Under “Stories” the narratives about checkpoints are taken first, and then various other aspects of accompaniment.

## 5.2 Issues with qualitative research

Miles and Huberman in their *Qualitative Data Analysis* flag up the issue that, 'the reliability and validity of qualitatively derived findings can be seriously in doubt.'<sup>121</sup> Miles highlights the issues saying,

'The most serious and central difficulty in the use of qualitative data is that methods of analysis are not well formulated. For quantitative data, there are clear conventions the researcher can use. But the analyst with a bank of qualitative data has few guidelines for protection against self-delusion, let alone the presentation of unreliable or invalid conclusions to scientific or policy-making audiences. How can we be sure that an "earthy," "undeniable," "serendipitous" finding is not, in fact, *wrong*?'<sup>122</sup>

Why then bother with this exercise of visiting a group of EAs to interview them and see how they carry out their task? Firstly, because it enables a better understanding of the setting in which EAs work and the kind of tasks they engage in. Secondly, because it results in different

---

<sup>121</sup> Miles and Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis*, p. 2.

<sup>122</sup> Matthew B. Miles, 'Qualitative data as an attractive nuisance: The problem of analysis.' *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 24, p. 591, quoted in Miles and Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis*, p. 2.



kinds of data with a quantitative as well as qualitative element, such as how many EAs were there in the field at the time of the research, or what were the tasks they were required to do. Thirdly, because research of this kind can be triangulated against other kinds of evidence, such as the programme archives discussed in the *Accompaniment traditions* chapter. Fourthly, because it presents a possibility of hearing from EAs without the hindrance of the vetting by programme staff of messages that EAs share as part of their advocacy of the work and its objectives. Qualitative research works on the basis that truths are socially embedded, and that investigation of the social setting is important, even if questions remain concerning the weight that can be placed upon any conclusions without further corroboration.

### **5.3 Stories, Framings and Dissonances**

#### **"Stories"**

##### ***Checkpoints***

It was a short walk from the starting point at Tantur Ecumenical Institute to the Bethlehem checkpoint #300. The destination was already within sight and sound from the Institute. This checkpoint is a major terminal at the junction between the Hebron Road and the separation barrier (at a point where the barrier consists of a concrete wall approximately nine metres tall with watchtowers and several large warehouse-style terminal buildings, a route for permitted road traffic and what concerns us here, a route through the terminal building, its turnstiles and scanners for foot passengers. The attention of Ecumenical Accompaniers (EAs) is given to monitoring, at certain times, the throughput of Palestinian foot passengers with their Jerusalem passes attempting to travel through from Bethlehem, mostly for reasons connected with employment. An EA describes accompaniment work in this location:

"we go there about 4:30 in the morning and count the people who are standing there waiting for to go to Jerusalem or Tel Aviv or somewhere in Israel to work and the checkpoint opens at five and from 5 to 7 or 7:30 or 8:30 depending on how fast they let them through the queue of more than two thousand people waiting there and going in and what we do is we try to facilitate the situation for the people on the ground by

calling the so-called humanitarian hotline - it's a telephone run by the army [Israeli Defence Force or IDF] to tell them that there are difficulties at some point of the control process or other and so we hope uh that it will be a little bit easier for them to go through and people tell us that when we are there when we are present it seems to be not that violent to them, not that difficult to get through, so just by standing there and watching it might be it might have a little influence on the behaviour of the soldiers."<sup>123</sup>

This excerpt is from an interview recorded on 22 November 2009 after the experience of standing for three and a half hours with two EAs on checkpoint watch, starting in the cold and dark of the night at 4:30 am. The EA describes how “when we are present it seems to be not that violent” and affirms that being there may have, “a little influence on the behaviour of the soldiers.”

It is not possible to say definitively what impact is made by their presence there. The ambiguity of the EAs' situation was apparent, firstly in that they were allowed to stand and watch, and secondly to intervene by phoning the army asking for help to resolve problems. They were not sure whether their calls to the army's “humanitarian hotline” made a positive difference, but it certainly made their presence known to the Israeli Defence Force or IDF. It was clear that they were tolerated as observers or they would have been removed. They intended to act as humanitarians. They entered a complex environment involving a few soldiers and other armed guards as well as those in the two queues (the main queue of men and the other queue of women and others who might succeed in gaining permission to pass through via the “humanitarian gate”, an alternative turnstile which to my observation opened more frequently).

As interview transcriptions will reveal, EAs were well aware of the ambiguity of their position. If the checkpoint is understood as part of the apparatus of occupation, what does it mean to volunteer to help it to run more smoothly? Whether or not the EAs detected that their presence influenced the soldiers, the EAs could monitor what was happening as observers

---

<sup>123</sup> In this and later quotations square brackets indicate an explanatory addition by the researcher.

whose statistics were of interest to other parties such as the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), and those who received their reports at EAPPI's Jerusalem office, as well as those in their sending countries interested to take note of their advocacy.

EAs are not the only people on checkpoint duty. The perspective of a representative of an Israeli peace group helps to illuminate the question of how much influence an observer may have in such a situation. The Israeli women of Machsom Watch also attend checkpoints such as Bethlehem #300, typically on the "Israeli side" of the barriers. They keep a motherly eye on the behaviour of soldiers and the professional guards deployed at checkpoints, and communicate in Hebrew rather than English. In a seminar led by a Machsom Watch activist she spoke sympathetically of her son's careers in the Israeli Defence Force, but also her concerns about the effect on Israeli society of the occupation. She also gave a clue as to why peace activists might be allowed at checkpoints.

"Checkpoints are symptomatic of the occupation. Two times a day every day Machsom Watch observe and document in Hebrew...the moment you are there you become a human rights defender...terrorists don't go to the checkpoints they go round. We are all women. I have learnt who are the soldiers you can talk to. In one sense we are serving as a fig-leaf for the Israeli army who think "we are so democratic that we allow peace activists."

On the impact of monitoring checkpoints she hinted at the stress young soldiers are under when carrying out checkpoint duties, whilst also recognising that a checkpoint can be "very severe" and "an inhuman structure":

"There have been minor improvements such as taps [for drinking water] and roofs [to protect the heads of people in the queues from sun and rain]. Many Palestinians don't understand why we are there. Most are pleased. Soldiers are also pleased we are there. One checkpoint near Nablus is very severe. Typically there are two young soldiers and 800 Palestinians. They must be very happy, these kids [the IDF soldiers], that we are there. It is an inhuman structure with loudspeakers."

The wider context of Israeli society, and their attitude to peace activism was touched upon:

The Israeli press are fed up with stories of Palestinian suffering. There is no debate about national service, conscription. They say, "You have to do it to protect your home." Debates in Israel are about "are we victims, are we not victims?" Most [Israelis] don't discuss politics. Some think we [in Machsom Watch] are "dreamers, unrealistic, naïve, manipulated to act against Israel because we are so simple-minded." Others think we are "traitors." Most are in the middle. At Qalandia checkpoint 3000 people a day pass through. There is a "humanitarian gate". It is only as big as this door. There is pushing and shoving. They have changed the definition of humanitarian. We are so powerless. Ten years we have been doing it. For many [Israelis] there is cognitive dissonance. If you don't know then your mind is at peace."<sup>124</sup>

Correspondence in the *Jerusalem Post* reveals both hostility to the activities of Machsom Watch, and also an indication that they can be taken seriously.

This Machsom Watch representative is a "human rights defender," and notes the redefinition of humanitarian in the term "humanitarian gate," underlining the way the system brings about "cognitive dissonance" in the Israeli population at large. Nevertheless the voice of Machsom Watch is heard in wider Israeli society, a fact that can be illustrated by searching the online pages of the Israeli newspaper *The Jerusalem Post*. One example from the letters page begins:

"Sir, - If anyone had a doubt that Machsom Watch is an anti-Israel and anti-Jewish organization, he has had his proof in their large advertisement demanding that Israel "allow" Muslims to pray at the Temple Mount."<sup>125</sup>

An earlier report indicated that Machsom Watch were able to meet with Chief of General Staff Lt.-Gen. Dan Halutz to discuss their perception of a deterioration in how soldiers at the checkpoint interpret the orders they receive.<sup>126</sup>

---

<sup>124</sup> Seminar at Tantur Ecumenical Institute, 2 November 2009.

<sup>125</sup> *The Jerusalem Post*, (2006) <http://www.jpost.com> [accessed 7 June 2011].

<sup>126</sup> *The Jerusalem Post*, jpost.com staff, 'Machsom Watch discusses checkpoint with Halutz', (3 May 2006), <http://www.jpost.com/Israel/Machsom-Watch-discusses-checkpoint-with-Halutz> [accessed 12th June 2011].

Bethlehem is not the only location where EAs attend checkpoints. A story from an interview of 23rd November 2009 concerned an event near Checkpoint # 56 in Hebron. This is at a boundary between two areas of that contested city, H1 and H2, where incidents frequently erupt:

“we are going to visit this boy next week to hear what happened but basically it was a young man lying with his eyes covered and his hands tied in a corner with fifty soldiers there and we were not allowed to have his name or anything and it was a long time and you hear about these things but we could not really do anything and he was just er taken away in the soldiers’ car and we didn’t know anything for a long time but now he is home again so we can visit him and that was very surreal because the powerless[ness] how powerless you felt but even though we could record it and I know that other organisations [value this] so it actually felt good that we could do something but even though I know the locals they couldn’t go there but they hoped that we could but even we couldn’t so but we have photos of the car and the soldiers so but that was um yeah.”

This echoes the feeling of powerlessness mentioned by the Machsom Watch activist. It also seems to show a lack of political awareness, raising questions about how well prepared EAs are for the job. At the risk of sounding harsh it can be questioned whether some of them are really just tourists.

Monitoring and recording what happens does not always seem enough, and there is a burden of trying to fulfil the expectations of local people. The story continues, indicating the interplay of different actors. It is clearly difficult to know whose account to believe and may not be possible to find out what another organisation knows. The story continues:

*"How did you find out what that was about? We met some soldiers and we asked and they said that it was a Palestinian guy who had attacked the soldiers but according to the guy witness it was fifty soldiers just er hitting him and they couldn’t see who it was but when we meet this person he was twenty I think to hear what happened [...] the problem is that a lot of organisation[s] who actually have the mandate to find information they are not allowed to give it to us er and you talk to people and here it’s easily rumours and you don’t really know but we are open we asked about it and if we are visiting his family now to show how we support and hear his side of it."*

Accompaniment in this case means listening to different sides of a story, trying to piece it together aware that some accounts may be just rumour, and following up the man and his family to show interest in their side of the story. One of the EAs in this team had media training and all have to write up their experiences for reporting back to the office in Jerusalem and for advocacy purposes. The desire to write up a good story is part of the motivation here, and of course that is part of an EA's role. "City of Dreams" is an example of an EA exercising journalistic skills in a piece about the hopes and dreams of Hebron residents (given as an appendix to this dissertation). Its technique is to present the people as if speaking for themselves.

An EA serving at Tulkarm in the northern West Bank describes the experience on the checkpoint at Taybe on a Thursday (one of his duty days there):

"you get a checkpoint which has about 4,000 to 5,000 people passing going to Israel for work mm you have to be there by half past four because it opens at half past four and from quarter past four when you arrive there are already maybe about 1,500 people waiting and some will tell you we've been waiting since two o'clock in the morning because we wanted to be the first because it will take time being processed inside you go to the turnstile then you go to the metal detector er another turnstile then I don't know what happens after that but I've been told that's what happens because we are not allowed as the foreigners or not citizens of Palestine so we are not allowed to go all the way so we only hear that when you go inside then you will go where they will scan your body in other words check whether you are carrying any metal things and all that stuff then you will also have a finger-printing system where you put your fingers and then they will verify your identity and all that stuff then you will be able to go on the other side."

This account of the process of going through a checkpoint is partly eyewitness and partly hearsay. It tallied with the experience at the Bethlehem checkpoint #300 where the EAs and other internationals with passports were free to pass from one side to the other, observing the whole process including the finger-print system undergone by Palestinians, but not international passport holders. The Tulkarm EA notes the difficulty for construction workers whose fingerprints may be damaged by the work they do, and then empathises with the toll it takes on a person to go through this experience regularly:

“you are frustrated you want to feed your children so that checkpoint will extend from quarter past four [to] around about seven.”

Statistics were used by EAs as a way of producing an accurate account of what is happening at the checkpoints. This can be verified to the extent that the counting can be repeated on successive days and over long periods of time. EAs were counting and tabulating statistics about the checkpoint, both the total numbers of people passing through on a particular day, and the flow rate at particular times, and also details such as the fact that some workers pass that way every day, others much less frequently. Statistics were logged and sent back in reports to the EAPPI Jerusalem office.

When EAs returned to their home countries they told the story of their experiences including statistics gathered and when challenged they could at least claim from their own experience that this was what was seen and heard.

#### ***EAPPI accompaniment other than at checkpoints***

This excerpt from a transcript of 22 November 2009 concerns accompaniment work with villagers in Jubbet ad Dhib, categorised “Area C” following the Oslo accords.<sup>127</sup> “Area C” implies West Bank territory under full Israeli control where in many cases Palestinians are struggling to retain their claim to rights including land ownership and use.

“they have no electricity er they have no road that [is they] can’t use the road because the settler has taken [it over] so they have to walk from other villages to get there and being there [is good] because they’re oh they are so friendly and they try to do something about the situation they set up er [they] have opened a small kindergarten with help from one [man] he is working in UNOCHA but he is doing it like a private cause [he] and his friend and being there we see how they try and how friendly they are and come there and have a cup of tea and taboon bread and its really nice so that’s a good experience and also because they really try...they are forgotten”.

---

<sup>127</sup> The Oslo accords are the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (DOP) signed in 1993 as the framework for future relations between the two parties of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.

This Scandinavian EA clearly enjoys the experience of meeting with people and sharing the taboon bread (baked in a traditional oven). Whose need is being met? The friendly welcome and traditional style hospitality is in contrast to the more draining environment of the checkpoint where in the cold of the early morning there is darkness, aggressive shouting on loudspeakers, men queuing in long cages. Here in the village are friendly people, smiles and traditional hospitality demonstrated in the sharing of food and drink. The purpose of going there becomes clear at the end, “they [...] are forgotten” (but not by the companions). Accompaniment can mean enjoying one another’s company and accepting hospitality.

Another comment from the same EA speaks of work with the Arab Educational Institute (AEI) in Bethlehem:

“we attended a women’s group and how they talked [about] all they have done and um how everything they were engaged in [...] and they were both Muslim and Christian and trying to talk together and um er I mean that’s an experience that gives hope for the future here.”

She added that, “they believe that we can do something and do it and uh that’s important to see also”. Here accompaniment is about inter-religious cooperation and the empowerment of women within Bethlehem. There is a strong sense in which the people are already accompanying one another as part of their resistance, and full of enthusiasm to share what they have been doing. The EA is encouraged to think of herself as part of this process: “we can do something, and do it.” Even before any other action, the simple fact of meeting and sharing stories is empowering.

One of the EAs in Hebron said that it is incredible that people who “suffer so much” can “smile much more than they do at home in Sweden.” Other EAs made similar observations, that people in adversity are sometimes happier than those who suffer no apparent lack except low spirits. A French EA commented:



“it’s not like in my country or in Europe they are always sad they stand up in the morning and ah they don’t want to live [they] want to have holidays the work is too much no here people are sad they had great problems and they have difficult lives very difficult and they are always joyful it’s absolutely wonderful”.

Comments such as these are self-referential projections by the EAs, the kind of impressions that might appear in any tourist brochure advertising a cross-cultural experience. The point is that life is not "absolutely wonderful" and that accompaniment is not about the spiritual progress of EAs.

Accompaniment brings new experiences for EAs. A young member of the Hebron team said,

“I was in a mosque for the first time ever yesterday and it was a really nice experience and also the synagogue and its then you don’t understand [the conflict] it’s so peaceful and nice and it’s hard to believe why it can cause so much problem”.

This particular EA was conscious of disconnection between the peaceful atmosphere of a worship space and the experience of observing the same people in conflict situations outside.

A Jerusalem EA had made a contact with a psychologist at the Augusta Victoria Hospital, a Lutheran institution which has one of the three landmark towers seen on the Jerusalem skyline when looking east towards the Mount of Olives. She was concerned about children who came “from the demolished house” and said we have, “a lot of things to do for the children”. House demolitions were taking place at this time particularly in Silwan, in what Israeli archaeologists and some others call “the City of David”, the sliver of land south of the Old City where David’s capital may once have stood. A clash of interests was taking place between those who wished to develop this area for archaeology and tourism (in the process expanding Israeli influence), and those Palestinians who wished to retain their homes in the crowded area of Palestinian housing there.<sup>128</sup> Attending to the psychological impact on the children, or at least finding out what had happened to them, was an aspect of accompaniment in that part of Jerusalem for an EA who had a background in psychology.

---

<sup>128</sup> A fuller account of this clash of interests by an EA, 'The Struggle for Silwan,' appeared on the EAPPI website, [accessed 22 June 2010].

Another Jerusalem EA had visited a Bedouin camp on the road between Jerusalem and Jericho.

He said,

“they have built a school to serve that camp and the surrounding ones and an Italian group have designed and helped or supervised their building of a school made from rubber tyres and mud and it was completed or almost completed in July and by the time they had almost finished it they immediately received a demolition order but even so they opened it as a school on the first of September so that was something I was invited to by the lady at the refugee camp who has an interest there”.

This was an example of an EA taking the initiative to follow up on personal contacts. More generally the interest of the programme is in maintaining a limited number of contacts that can be maintained in the long term by successive teams of EAs.

A Scottish EA was intrigued by the problems faced by a man with learning difficulties. He was vulnerable during one particular incident, but the observation is made that he is well integrated into, and protected by the local community:

“he’s in his thirties or his forties I think he may be in his forties but he has quite severe mental disability um and it’s wonderful because he’s like he’s so much more a part of the community than you find that I have found in Edinburgh in Derby and in other places I’ve lived he’s just he’s everywhere um his name’s [she mentions his name] and he’s a lovely guy and um and he’s kind of one of the blokes and he’s also one of the children er it’s very interesting how that plays out um and people look after him but he [...] throws stones like the kids do the kids throw stones and um but he looks like an adult and it’s very worrying that when the soldiers come in he looks like an adult but he acts like a child and he doesn’t have um the capacity to think ahead about the er the results of his actions.”

Here accompaniment includes learning about different possibilities in another culture, and possibly also differences between urban and rural communities. The EA notices that a man who might have been excluded from the community in the UK is very much part of the community in the West Bank. But there are dangers for such a person living where there are frequent incursions by IDF soldiers who many not recognize his condition. She takes up the story:

“there was one day about a week and a half ago and my team-mate and I were watching the soldiers who had come in and they were being very provocative and coming in and just sitting [in their covered jeeps] in the village for long periods of time

and the longer they're here the more the kids throw stones and it just kind of ratchets up in tension and he was throwing stones at the soldiers on that day and a few of the kids were as well and there's a soldier got out of the jeep and went up the hill and um we didn't see it was [she names the same man] we just saw that it was a person it looked like a man and we kind of we stayed a slight distance away soldiers were on high alert and someone shouted from one of the rooftops because everybody was hiding in their houses someone shouted tell them he's crazy tell them he's crazy we were like it's [names the man]".

What does accompaniment mean in such a situation? The EAs have some possibility of intervening as internationals wearing a distinctive EAPPI jacket and a known role. The EA continues:

"we approached the soldiers and by that point two of them were pinning him down and he was completely panicking and we are trying to explain to them but luckily lots of the soldiers speak very good English although I have a few I have polite Hebrew things to try and break down barriers but I don't have any functional Hebrew and so we spoke to him [in English] there were four soldiers and two of them were quite receptive we spoke to them and once we had been standing there for a short while some of his family came out and also tried to explain the situation then they brought his mother out who must be in her nineties and looked like she was going to have a heart attack and it was quite intense and um we eventually negotiated the release of him and that was very concrete".

Language is one of the issues highlighted here. At least three languages are employed in the interaction: English, Hebrew and Arabic. Other languages are in the background as the EA team is an international group. It is interesting to consider whether the language barrier can sometimes act as a different kind of marker. English as the language of choice identifies the EAs as internationals, who are one step removed from the immediate conflict. They are sometimes able to be a catalyst to enable the conversation between soldiers and locals to take place, using English as a *lingua franca*.

The villagers played a significant role among those who saw what was happening and knew how to respond. The story resolves itself as local people get involved in the conversation with the soldiers, sharing with the EAs in negotiating the man's release. Such an outcome apparently depends on appealing to the better instincts of the soldiers. Nonviolent intervention can work when moral codes of decent behaviour can be appealed to. There is an

underlying assumption that soldiers can behave reasonably, even if the wider picture and the history of past encounters suggests that is not always the case.

According to the EA team, this incident occurred within a broader context of a village threatened by the route of the separation barrier, which “bottles in” the nearby town of Qalqilya. It also came against a background of recent and frequent incursions by the IDF, including soldiers setting off sound bombs during the night, and taking into detention villagers including some of the children who had engaged in stone throwing, according to EA reports. We have here an example of EAs showing their usefulness.

The economic situation of Jayyus is to the fore in these conversations remembered by an EA:

“we went and had tea with the man who runs the vegetable shop and the woman who runs the shop across the road and had quite interesting talks about the occupation about the economic restrictions actually which is often what conversations come down to in Jayyus once you have gone through the wall and the farming and the water it’s really the economic stuff that people are really suffering from at the moment and there’s such high unemployment in the village [...] I expected and know that people want to leave but the vast majority of people want to leave”.

Local people who have the opportunity often want to leave to make a better life. The accompanier wants to encourage resilience when human rights including employment are denied. Yet she sees that many of the villagers would leave for economic reasons if they had the opportunity. If the accompanier is there to make it more likely that people will stay and resist, then that calls into question “principled impartiality.” EAPPI may be more interventionist than it likes to admit.

A male EA placed in the rural village of Yanoun, overshadowed by the settlement called Itamar, turns to observing some of the cultural differences between his home life and life in the village, such as gender divides and attitudes to alcohol. Like the story from Jayyus of the integration of a mentally disabled person into the community, here in the perception of the EA an unexpected good seems to be a low level of domestic violence:

"[It] is for us painful also to see how women are made to work here in our local context we feel it is a functional division and there are some things about it that are astonishing as there is no alcohol there is not as much um domestic violence [as] in other countries that I have been to and here in the countryside it rarely ever happens everyone knows everything about everybody so these things are quite on a good and socially acceptable level it's not that somebody is locked inside or so but of course we have this division and you will never see a woman from here walk without her hair covered and never would she talk to me on her own initiative in the street and never would I dare to do it I just greet her and that's it so that's kind of odd for us I suppose and I guess they must think it odd the way these people from other countries behave especially when it comes to our sleeping situation here we share bedrooms gender mixed nobody talks about this in the village but everybody knows of course they know what the house is like but this is a taboo so we don't talk about it".

On one level this account represents the normal wash-out of intercultural encounter, that the taboos of one culture are acceptable in another and vice versa. A possible concern is that the EA may be overestimating what can be concluded from their observation of this "close-knit society."

This male EA does not have access to the female society of the village, and there is also a language barrier, so it is hasty to say that social problems do not exist because "everybody knows." Such a claim is lacking in evidence, so what we have here is an opinion.

Whether or not there is domestic violence, there is the experience of violence. Another EA in Yanoun talks about the life there:

"sometimes we meet people who have just been beaten [by soldiers or settlers] coming back from hospital or had their olive trees uprooted or sometimes it's just quiet and you sit around have tea and coffee of course lots of teas and coffee drinking and sharing part of their life [...] and the villagers know and tell us never walk any further than the almond tree because then the settlers from up here will come I could do it on my own if they wanted to shoot [at] me or throw stones on me but I don't want to risk that they the settlers here come down and make more problems for the villagers".

Here we find that in addition to the invisible barriers of cultural norms and taboos, there are also invisible barriers due to tensions between villagers and settlers. The almond tree represents a "thus far and no farther" in the relationship between villagers and settlers, even though the land beyond was previously seen as village land.

Thomas Mandal's *Living with Settlers* tells the story of Yanoun and the reasons for international presence there including interviews with Yanoun villagers.<sup>129</sup> It describes how,

“Nearly all residents in the upper part of Yanoun evacuated the village on October 18<sup>th</sup> 2002, feeling that intimidation had become unbearable. The next day, the villagers began to return, accompanied by Israeli and international activists of all faiths, outraged as the situation faced by the villagers. Ever since this time, a house in the village has been home to a permanent, voluntary international presence. Since June 2003, the presence has been provided by the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI).”<sup>130</sup>

One particular incident that occurred in autumn 2009 illustrated both the cultural misunderstanding and the hostility between villagers and settlers: “a big group of settlers came as tourists and wanted to swim in the well of drinking water.” To settlers this is their right, this is their land, and the swimming in the springs of water is connected with religious practice. To the villagers it is their land, their water, their ongoing existence that is at stake. Attempts have since been made to make the well more secure.

Further clues as to the framing of this situation by the settlers were derived from the website “Itamar, Gem of the Hills,” Itamar being the settlement closest to Yanoun. Resident Leah Goldsmith describes the area as follows:

“hill country, tremendously big, picturesque and mysterious, varied with long and wide valleys who resemble a mosaic coat of many colors ranging from pea to deep jade greens and chestnut browns in the winter and spring months. In the summertime the colors are dry, like the colors of Rebecca’s jug, in which she served Eliezer and the camels in Babylon.”<sup>131</sup>

Biblical metaphors abound. The colours of the landscape are linked to the patriarch Joseph, and Rebecca’s jug hints at both the outer dryness of a drought stricken land where sources of water are a divine blessing. Goldsmith continues:

---

<sup>129</sup> Thomas Mandal, *Living with Settlers: Interviews with Yanoun Villagers* ([Oslo]: Norwegian Church Aid and EAPPI, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., 2006).

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>131</sup> Leah Goldsmith, 'Life on Itamar', <http://www.shechem.org/itamar/eindex.html> [accessed 11 February 2011].

“There are springs and wells in the hills. The bounty stemming from the blessing given to Joseph... ‘The blessings of the father are potent above the blessings of my progenitors to the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills’ (Vayechi 49).”<sup>132</sup>

Vayechi is the last Torah portion in the book of Genesis (47:28 – 50:26) and it includes Jacob/Israel’s blessing of his sons when he was about to die (49:22 ff). The biblical quotation from Genesis 49 includes two unique terms in Hebrew and scholars acknowledge that the verse is capable of different translations. There is an alternative reading that would not fit Leah Goldsmith’s narrative so easily: “The blessings of your father surpass the blessings of the ancient mountains, that which is most desired in the ancient hills.”<sup>133</sup> Settler communities are interested in staking a claim on the everlasting hills themselves rather than a less tangible something that is “desired in the ancient hills.” Her reading of scripture is intended to provide a biblical mandate for modern possession of the everlasting hills. Do peoples belong to the land where their desires are blessed, or does the land belong to one group alone whose blessing is to enter into its possession?

Goldsmith admits the existence of “the overshadowed existence of the local natives,” comparing the life in her own yishuv to that of a “hermit.” The source of conflict and the isolation of the yishuv are attributed to the “intifada AlAksa.” The local natives are compared with “the Canaani, the Perizzi and the Chitti”, a life “running parallel with your own but on a completely different plane.”

This is just one of many Jewish narratives, and it would be wrong to suggest that all Israelis think alike. It is mentioned here because Itamar and its outposts present the main challenge to the existence of Yanoun, and the threat to the village provided an argument for the presence of EAs in Yanoun.

---

<sup>132</sup> Genesis 49:26.

<sup>133</sup> See note on Genesis 49:26 in Berlin, *The Jewish Study Bible*, ed. by Adele and Marc Zvi Brettler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 98.

A Yanoun-based EA had gone on a placement visit to a village near Hebron and an experience there highlighted the difficulty of accompaniment when faced with a painful situation about which the EA can do nothing:

“I went with the team there to another small village not at all as nice and picturesque as this in the south Hebron hills and people there were really poor [...] they are next to a settlement really close much closer than here really on the other side of the road a big nice settlement with nice houses Karmel um but people in this village they have been refugees from the Negev desert long ago and they bought land in this area and have small houses or tents or not even tents any longer and they have had house demolition orders and especially one woman I have written my latest report on it she was sitting there under something probably given by the Red Cross her house was demolished last year and it was a simple house but it was still some kind of concrete floor and so on it's demolished and since then she is under these sheets of plastic rather than a real tent and now there were more demolition orders in this village and also for her kind of tent and she was sitting there and she didn't speak any English er she was really wanting money and we are not supposed to give money of course and um we had some sweets and toys for her child but what she really wanted was money and she looked very sad and depressed in a way and I felt it was really hard to be an EAPPI because I could have given her money but we are not supposed to and it's not a good thing to do I think because maybe they will all ask for money but then we are not really in for giving economical support but to have nothing to say really nothing to do just leaving her as she was smiling a bit when we left and said maas-salama [Goodbye] but I didn't hand out any uh solidarity brochures [leaflets about EAPPI in Arabic] because I think that would have been ah too much ahhh and she is that's kind of a sore in me.”

This deeply felt confession of feelings of inadequacy seemed to be symbolic of something deeper. The accompanier is often helpless to bring change, in stark contrast to the aim of the programme which looks for an end to the occupation. EAs are not alone in this, as the EA observed:

“there are loads of internationals in Palestine maybe too many sometimes and in some families they say well they come here they take notes and they report but nothing happens they are not saving our village and she could really say that I think”.

This was not the comment of someone lacking motivation. It came across as a plea for realism about accompaniment. There are harsh realities that even best practice cannot address. The larger charge is that EAPPI promises more than it can fulfil. EAs also lack a firm basis on which to make their observations about a culture that is strange to them and which literally



speaks a different language. At times their observations are not much different from tourists' impressions.

## "Framings"

This node is organised around how EAs frame the conflict and how they see themselves in relation to it. Some of the characteristic vocabulary is highlighted in bold.

We begin with a Norwegian EA on placement in Bethlehem who talked in terms of “presence and solidarity”, and used the political terminology relating to the Oslo accords designating the West Bank into Areas A, B and C (with A as Palestinian control, C as Israeli control and B shared control, though of course Israel has overall control). The accords are a “product of Oslo” which has brought into being complex “facts on the ground” that take some effort to understand.

“for me it’s important that it’s the church of Christian[s] in Palestine and the Middle East who [have] asked for **presence and solidarity** and um this question became personal for me like they are asking after me”.

“I didn’t know all the thing[s] about the **Area A, B, C** when I came [*laughs*] even though that’s a product from Oslo I didn’t know so much about it [*laughs again*]”

“you really feel a **part of the worldwide church** when you are here for me that’s important so ah that my word will be a part of my practice.”

This EA finds that belonging as “part of the worldwide church” is a significant identity perhaps reflecting her own work for the church when at home. A Hebron-based EA from Sweden who claimed to be “a secular person” also used the idea of “being present”:

“accompaniment for me is very simple just if the person like[s] to speak about the problems of occupation that’s fine or speak of simple things as well and try to find similarities like [to] just be there and show that you care and sometimes just **being present** and just walk around”.

Hebron is a very particular kind of place shaped something like a bowl, giving it a characteristic sound as the cries of the muezzins echo hauntingly around. In some parts of

Hebron loud Israeli music echoed in the street. The Hebron protocol, part of the Oslo accords, has divided the city into H1 and H2. Although Hebron is predominantly Palestinian, Israeli settlements have been established in parts of the old city which are within the zone called H2. The line between H1 and H2 can be a very uncomfortable place with sporadic violence attending it, ranging from settler children provoking Palestinian schoolchildren to more serious incidents. This is the context of which this young Swedish EA speaks:

“and then it’s Tel Rumeida with the community centre and a lot of people living in houses where they are having a hard time with the settlers so we walk there a lot and then we walk Shuhada Street and [that] we do a lot just because we **show that we are there** to do it and we can do it [...] we have the Bab Al Zawiya here so it’s basically this area we walk around in mostly H2”

The community centre is a meeting place for Palestinian young people, where they can mix in a supervised safe environment to socialise or use computers. Shuhada Street, nicknamed “Ghost Town” is an area formerly Palestinian that has been cleared sitting as it does on the H1/H2 boundary. It is open to traffic for the settlements, IDF soldiers and cars belonging to TIPH (the Temporary International Presence in Hebron) that patrol along that way. Barriers, visible and invisible abound in this contested town. The religious divide, the Israeli/Palestinian divide and the language divide seem to split along the H1/H2 boundary, yet this secular EA does not see religion as the root of conflict.

“the **religions are not the base problem** it’s not the actual problem I think the religions can live side by side and er yeah I think it’s nice to show it as well that we are here and work with people”.

Though claiming a secular outlook our EA understood that she was a representative of a Christian programme. She was keen that there should be consistency between belief and practice and that Christians should be “engaged” and active:

“I have personally always been ambivalent towards hearing people in the church talking so much [about] how you should be a good person and then I see a lack of action. I did that a lot but now I have a different opinion because I see a lot of people so **engaged** um in this case Christians from different countries [...] it’s still really the World Council of Churches and it’s making a lot of good work it’s not just talking in the church and I like to see the **action** of it um and I think it’s important for me to see.”

“for me personally I er um I don’t have that faith I’m living in a Christian society with all the traditions but I am secular.”

Despite naming herself secular she repeated the concern that there should be Christian

integrity and then explained that it is possible to attend church without holding its beliefs:

“I think it’s important that **prayer and action** goes hand in hand and um er well I think it’s very personal what motives you have you can actually be in a church and like the atmosphere and be there without actually having the same beliefs”.

A Bethlehem-based EA framed the activity of EAPPI in terms of “support” and “solidarity” with the humanitarian approach modelled by a number of NGOs:

“we go to the villages round here especially those where UNOCHA [Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs] tells us that there are problems with let’s say the wall which is built or which is going to be built in the future where they take their land the agricultural land and so they have no income any more we go there to know what’s happening and to **support** them to hear their stories to listen to them to show them our **solidarity** we go to see the churches on Sunday we usually go to attend a service except today [*laughs*] because we are doing our interview [*laughs*] and to show up as the EAs and we go to the NGOs and talk to them ICRC [International Committee of the Red Cross] UNOCHA the Arab Educational Institute and there are several others in Bethlehem and we listen to them we join groups they run English conversation group we’ve been to a women’s group last week which was a very nice experience and so that’s what we do in the evening we sit in front of our computers and write and write and write”.

One EA had a Jewish background, and for her a main motive, apart from her Christian faith was an interest in “politics and human rights”:<sup>134</sup>

“my mother was a Jewish refugee from Czechoslovakia non-practising but all the time that she had been in Britain she had been very against what has been going on in Palestine and I suppose as I became more interested in **politics and human rights** particularly as a social worker as well in my adult life I became more and more concerned myself about what was going on and for some years now I’ve been looking actually I had in my mind that I wanted to come out as an NGO”.

---

<sup>134</sup> Liam Mahony, *Proactive Presence: Field Strategies for Civilian Protection* (Geneva: Henry Dunant Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, 2006).

The language of “protective presence” which she used when describing the practice of overnight visits to a threatened village community is reminiscent of Liam Mahony’s term “proactive presence”.

“we actually stay in the community overnight from Friday to Saturday once a week in order to act as um a **protective presence** there used to be lots of internationals doing it but we are probably the one group that do it consistently week after week um they have had a number of attacks from settlements”.

A Jerusalem-based EA who had had some involvement with the Palestine Solidarity Campaign liked using the word “solidarity” to describe the meaning of accompaniment:

“it means **standing in solidarity** with many people it means standing in **solidarity** with victims of situations such as house demolitions it also means standing in **solidarity** with peace groups mainly peace groups the main peace groups are Israeli that we work with but there are some Palestinian/Israeli peace groups whom we also support so that it’s really standing in **solidarity** with people who are either victims of the situation or striving for peace.”

“every Friday afternoon we stand with the ladies of Women in Black who in Perez Square in West Jerusalem for the last twenty years have been demonstrating against the occupation and they suffer a lot of insults from the Israeli public...we work with the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions **in solidarity** with them...we make periodic visits to Ma’ale Michmash to give solidarity to them [a Bedouin camp] and since the EAs have been going there the harassment has stopped”.

Two of the twelve EAs interviewed were from South Africa. Both took up the analogy with apartheid, though one emphasized this more than the other in his framing of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict:

“coming from a background of apartheid in South Africa when I arrived and see the realities I said that this is **beyond apartheid** I have lived in apartheid [for the] first fifteen years of my life and I’ve seen apartheid and then when it ended I saw a new South Africa being born”.

When he repeated this phrase “beyond apartheid” he was asked to unpack what he meant and he did so using the idea that checkpoints are “inhuman” in imposing restrictions not experienced even under South African apartheid:

“the situation within the checkpoints [...] it’s **inhuman** if we can use that word because when you look at it you can’t believe that it’s a human being treating another human being to stand in the line to be shouted at you see an elderly person being shouted at by a young boy because he is a soldier he is carrying a gun shouting the way sometimes they shout it’s not that they are doing it randomly but the way sometimes that [it] happens and the waiting period you want to go to work but you have to be early as early as four hours before the time of where you start to work so you spend more time waiting than the time you will spend at work so that situation then say [apartheid] because with us yes it was apartheid but you could go to work those who were working at that time without being checked randomly and being told that you need to be on the other side between five [am] and seven o’clock [pm] then after seven o’clock if you are on the other side you are considered sleeping in Israel illegal[ly] [...] yah so it is those kind of things that make me say apartheid was not doing that to us”.

Asked if those were the differences, what he considered the similarities to apartheid he replied:

“the similarities will be having an area that is given a name saying it’s Israeli only [or] Palestinian only so [that] means you cannot enter if you are an Israeli on this on the Palestinian only [land] and you cannot enter in an Israeli land if you are a Palestinian [...] that separation creates the same element because we in South Africa we had the pubs that were for whites we had the hotels that were only for whites and then you have the black hotels [here] you have some of the roads which are coined as Israeli only but still in the West Bank [...] you find here when the road goes through settlement[s] they say it’s only for the Israelis.

In addition to settler-only roads, the Oslo accords reinforced separation by creating in the West Bank areas A, B and C with different rights of access.

Unpacking the word “ecumenical” this South African whose first language was Zulu turned to the word “ubuntu”.

“it means I need to do what is within my spirit so in other words what I feel is good for my spirit - I need to make sure that I have executed in a good way there is a Zulu name we call it ubuntu that is er humanity [...] in order to bring peace I need to love my neighbour as I love myself so it doesn’t matter whether you live twenty thousand kilometers away from me but you are still my neighbour because you live in a continent that I live in so that’s how ecumenical seems to me.”

The background and interests of EAs influenced their sense of focus as this South African example showed. One of the EAs in Yanoun had previous experience in the NGO sector, and said that he considered that,

“this conflict here merits special attention because it’s *in nuce* [in a nutshell] all that international conflicts are about.”

He had been inspired both by friends in the solidarity movement and also Jewish people he had met in his home country.

An EA serving in Jayyus was clear about the significance of the programme’s practice of “active nonviolence”:

“there’s a common misperception of **nonviolence** as not doing anything as being a punching bag and just letting people walk all over you and its partly because of the unfortunate connotations of pacifists [pacifism] which shifted some years ago to nonviolence but so often I come across people who think that nonviolence is the weak answer I know through having tried it [*laughs*] that it takes a hell of a lot more strength to try a nonviolent approach and to not lose your temper and to not just strike out in a situation and to really try and look for the most constructive player that it takes a lot more strength and I think that’s why I say active and I think it has to be active it can’t be complacent you can’t practice nonviolence and not speak out against the violence that is happening and I suppose in that sense it’s active as well.”

### ***Religious or spiritual framing***

At the time of the study the EAPPI website mentioned EAPPI's Christian and church involvement thus:

'Participate in the daily life and work of Palestinian and Israeli civil society, Churches and Christian communities. For example, we take part in the annual olive harvest, meet and learn from the experiences of Israeli activists in Jerusalem, Haifa and Sderot, and regularly attend church services in Jerusalem, Nablus and Bethlehem.'<sup>135</sup>

Participation in the programme does not require EAs to be overtly Christian in their beliefs.

Of the twelve interviewed for this project one professed to be Taoist, another to be secular.

Attendance at churches is to meet programme needs rather than the spiritual needs of participants. A Bethlehem EA highlights the sense that visiting a church is for the duty’s sake:

---

<sup>135</sup> EAPPI website, [www.eappi.org](http://www.eappi.org) [accessed 11 February 2011].

“we’ve got quite a lot of churches that means we go there [to] see what’s going on with the Christian society and we try to cover not only one but more of these churches.”

For those in remoter districts such as Tulkarm, Jayyus or Yanoun, there is the visit to the Anglican church in Nablus, but little opportunity to experience local Christianity in their placements. They find their own Christian fellowship, and that is difficult in teams where they represent a diversity of beliefs. An unmet need was acknowledged even by a Jerusalem EA despite the variety of Christian congregations in that city. In Tulkarm the EAs repeated what is perhaps an exaggeration, that there is only one local Christian and everyone knows him by name.

The Bethlehem team had experienced a Friday vigil held near the separation barrier by Latin Catholic nuns, saying “I think it is a good idea to do a prayer as well.”

Speaking of the experience of attending church in Bethlehem one interviewee said,

“I can understand what’s happening I can’t understand a word and [yet] it’s good to celebrate the Holy Communion [...] I can take part [in] it and that’s important for me.”

The same EA noted that a service had included readings from the Psalms and commented,

“you have some theological work about what do you think about the Old Testament or the Jewish people as God’s people and so on.”

A comparison was made by this EA with her experience in Norway where she said that people are more likely to have a problem with the New Testament than the Old, because they think of the Old Testament stories as human stories, “but they have a problem with Jesus and what he’s done on the cross”. She felt that being in Bethlehem was drawing her closer to the New Testament.

One EA who had commented on the lack of opportunity to share spiritually also reacted negatively to the use of the term “Holy Land” in one of the interview questions (number 25), saying:

"I never want[ed] to come here in the Holy Land I don't like the name Holy Land but I don't want to come to Israel as a pilgrim I hate that - so when the opportunity was there to come as EA volunteer I took the opportunity."

There is a distinction between accompaniment and pilgrimage. This brings to mind a distinction that existed when the World Council of Churches came into being, between two ecumenical streams of witness: "Faith and Order" and "Life and Work". Both emphases could be found among the EAs. One serving in Tulkarm reacted quite differently to the term "Holy Land" seeing it as a "reservoir of faith" as well as a land in conflict. Asked what brought him to serve as an EA he said,

"basically the interest of the Holy Land it's one of the reservoirs of our faith as I am a Christian myself so whatever I read in the Bible is based on this land so then I wanted to find out [about] this kind of turmoil or conflict that carried on even years before I was born and it's still continuing what is the cause of it and how can it be eliminated from being a continual thing but create peace and just[ice] for all people who are living in the Holy Land".

A Hebron EA could make the link between spiritual disciplines and activism as an accompanier:

"I was unfortunate that I didn't manage to stay with the Women in Black in Jerusalem and I would have liked that and to me that is a form that's both accompaniment and vigil and prayer I suppose um I do believe in the power of prayer um so I suppose [...] one of the things about advocacy it's a bit like prayer that if enough people are advocating or praying the same thing that maybe in time the balance could be tipped towards the goal of that prayer so I do think that prayer is very important on a personal level very important indeed".

On spiritual practice a Yanoun-based EA said:

"I consider myself as a Daoist [I] practice some Buddhist meditation and that's about it - I would refer to the fourth truth and the eightfold path and try to just follow this and try to manage my behaviour accordingly and really trying to be nonviolent in that respect and even feel and show compassion toward the enemies like settlers and soldiers I need not see them as an enemy - and there is a funny sideline to that it is obviously easier for me than for some of my very Christian colleagues because I am accustomed more to guns - I have served in the Swiss military so I am not afraid of guns so it means I am not as stressed out as some of them are and so it's much easier to stay calm - they have to do a lot more effort to just be equal about it."

This EA was happy to explain how his former military service squared with the practice of Daoism:



"I wasn't a Daoist or Buddhist then - it didn't fit in well especially with my political beliefs about justice and so I did both - I served and then went to jail for not wanting to serve anymore because in that time there was not civil service as an alternative so I had to go to jail - and that was a good decision both of it I mean - I would have missed serving because actually I see now how it helps me to really put myself into that nineteen year old soldier that was once I - and to see hey that's not a monster or something - that's a bored kid who plays with his gun because he doesn't have anything else to do and he wants to feel strong and he has a surplus of energy that has to come out and it comes out nastily - that is normal we did that and we stood on school yards so - even the appalling situation that the kids are around guns for me is not so catastrophic as for other people and I think even for the kids it is not any more - they kind of filter that off - the gun itself is not a problem it's just a part or an element of that soldier the whole thing the structural violence that surrounds them daily that is the problem it's not the gun that as a thing [is a problem]."

His EA colleague was aware of a holy site nearby to Yanoun that probably gave the village its name, though for her the biblical connection was a bit hazy:

"there is an old mosque ruins of an old mosque [...] I haven't looked in the Old Testament but it said it should be I think it was the son of Aaron [*cf* "*Joshua son of Nun*", *Ex. 33:11, Nu. 11:28, Jos. 1:1 etc.*] but it's called Nabi Noun".

This was part of an answer to the question about biblical references appropriate to accompaniment. Here are some of the biblical connections noticed by EAs:

"swords into ploughshares [Isaiah 2:4; Micah 4:3] is I suppose one of the baseline passage for nonviolence and for the practice of nonviolence I think one of the things [is] that for me [the] ecumenical accompaniment programme has a faith in the fact that we don't need to fight to resolve this issue [so] swords into ploughshares."

A Jayyus EA identified with an idea of pilgrimage found in the Psalms and looked forward to standing in the courts of the LORD. Although the actual reference was not mentioned it is probably Psalm 116:17-19.<sup>136</sup> In the event the experience that EA had was a difficult one and led on to a reflection about victims and victimhood:

"one of the psalms [says] to go to Jerusalem and stand in its courts and praising God - in [the] week of training we went to a synagogue and it was quite quite challenging for me I mean I cannot speak Hebrew and I wasn't able to sing the psalms they sang but just [to] be there as observer part of the worship and I [...] looked forward to that but

---

<sup>136</sup> Psalm 116:17-19, 'I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice and call on the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people, in the courts of the house of the Lord, in your midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the Lord!' Other similar references are found in Psalm 96:8; 100:4; and 84:2.

being there I found it so difficult to be free and to be there because just previously in the same day we had speakers and we saw things - things of the occupation.”

What could have been a joyful experience was influenced by a conjunction of experiences that seemed contradictory. The same EA, had a discipline of reading daily lections and these evoked responses because of the new experiences in the context in which they were being read:

“the set text in the Anglican lectionary [...] was about forgiving in Matthew 20 and about a vineyard in Matthew 21 [...] vineyard er yeah people would come and work in the vineyard [...] and afterwards having paid them [...] and how we cannot see each other eye to eye and find solace as Israeli/Palestinian people in the same vineyard [...] which belongs to God in the same small country.”

Another biblical observation concerned being joyful even when nothing succeeds.<sup>137</sup>

“Habakkuk 3 verse 17 about you know all these things are happening around you and yet you remain jubilant joyful in the Lord and I think this for me personally although being very far from home and having children and a wife its tragic already not being with them it is to remain positive to remain hopeful that God is - God is not dead it will [change] for the better one day.”

A modern story that parallels 2 Samuel 12 came into view for a Tulkarm EA:

“I saw the biblical story of David and Nathan who sees a small sheep who has been stolen and the women here [who are] political women told us a story [of a] rich settler who had invited some friends and he stole a small sheep [from] a farmer Palestinian farmer because he wanted to eat and to make a barbecue and he had sheep [lamb] it's the story of Nathan and David.”

A story mentioned by the same EA parallels Jeremiah 32:15<sup>138</sup> but with the twist in this case that it is a Palestinian woman for whom the promise comes true:

“I have a friend here and she's in refugee's camp so we went to her we had a wonderful wonderful afternoon and she bought a land with olive trees and we went with her to the olive trees and we see her land wonderful [from] the hill above Tulkarm and of course it's Jeremiah - Jeremiah 32:15 you will buy new houses you will buy land you will still of course you see.”

---

<sup>137</sup> Habakkuk 3:17-18, 'Though the fig tree does not blossom, and no fruit is on the vines; though the produce of the olive fails and the fields yield no food; though the flock is cut off from the fold and there is no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will exult in the God of my salvation.'

<sup>138</sup> Jeremiah 32:15, 'For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land.'

A Swiss referendum had recently disallowed the building of minarets there, leading to this biblical reflection:

“this morning I was speaking with my husband because of the story of the minarets in Switzerland and he told me you have to understand because he tries to make me understand what the Swiss people are thinking so he told me you see you cannot build churches in Arabia you cannot build churches in na –na why do you want to buy a minaret in Switzerland I told him no it’s not how you say in English *oiel pour oiel dents pour dents* [eye for eye tooth for tooth] I think it’s not that Jesus says *oiel pour oiel dent pour dent non* you see every day you have such stories linked with the Bible.”

The Muslim feast of sacrifice, Eid had recently taken place from 27th to 30th November 2009, leading to a reflection on Isaac, Ishmael and Eid:

"Ishmael of course - Eid - Ishmael and Isaac huh I had to explain the story of Isaac to the Muslim family who told me the story of Ishmael so it’s not exactly the same but as they are very interested - in my religion it’s Isaac - in yours it’s Ishmael - so you see it’s quite a link huh.”

There was also an EA at Yanoun who had come across Munib Younan’s reflections on accompaniment in the light of Luke 24 and the story of Emmaus. She had kept the relevant pages from the WCC publication (2005) *Theological Reflection on Accompaniment* so that she could reflect on them further during her time of service.

### **"Dissonances"**

The third category used in the coding of interview transcripts was that of “Dissonances.” By this is meant observations by EAs that seemed to this researcher a little surprising or off message, but also potentially helpful to theological reflection.

As already mentioned, an EA in Bethlehem recognised a dilemma for accompaniers that their actions may be in some sense sustaining a terrible situation:

“maybe if we take the phone maybe they open the humanitarian lane or maybe they open one more ID booth but it’s a balance because also we have to figure out all the time the system is terrible and I’m not always satisfied with trying to make this terrible system work smoother because it’s a dilemma I want to [*laughs and says jokingly*] blow up the checkpoint sometime yes because the system is terrible and what even if they open one more booth it’s still humiliating going through the

checkpoint or someone has to work around the place to get rid of the checkpoint because it shouldn't be like that".

A Hebron EA admits that wearing the EA vest can be a burden and that accompaniment can involve fighting off the desire to be someplace else:

"at home if I don't have the vest [the EAPPI uniform] I like to be social and speak to people but sometimes it's like OK I don't have the energy to do it now I just want to be with myself and I don't want to talk to this person maybe I think like that but here I can do that because I'm here that is my obligation to do so when I have the vest I'm always [thinking] I shouldn't be having my thoughts someplace else I should be here present".

Another Hebron EA noted an unmet spiritual need:

"when I was back in England it played a huge part in my life uh I meditated in the church every morning on the way to work I go to many church services I'm very much integrated with the church it has been quite challenging here but in Hebron there really isn't a place of worship at all and because we are a team that is diverse in its attitude I suppose to Christian worship we don't actually have what I would call other than the grace before meals any form of group worship I try to meditate to some extent in the mornings before other people get up sometimes and I occasionally take the opportunity whether it be a mosque or a synagogue or a tree or a sacred place to sit but apart from when we go to Jerusalem... when I go to Bethlehem I will...not for my placement visit but at Christmas I shall be attending rather a lot of different denominations over a two day period and in Jerusalem I've been to church a lot but my experience here is that it has to be an internal thing because there isn't anything external to do.

An EA at Yanoun, which by virtue of its remote location limits contact with other communities, noted that it would be useful to have more contact with Israelis and hoped that a part of the programme when EAs go to Jerusalem (Israel Exposure Week) would meet this need:

"it would be very interesting to talk to the Jews it's very easy to fall into this we and them and I feel it's easy to get along with the Muslims here but it tends we tend to see the Jews more as enemies which is not good in a way I think but we haven't got...but maybe during this mid-term orientation it was called the Israel Exposure Week before so it's meant we should meet [them].

An EA serving in Jerusalem said,

“in general I am surprised to be not with Bible reflection I don’t meet people who are interested for spiritual reflection...very little...I don’t need a lot of very big reflection but a little reflection in your day” [...] “I am alone with spiritual things nobody is interested”.

There were several EAs who raised the issue of team relationship, without being prompted on this subject. No quotation is given here because of confidentiality issues, but although some teams worked well there were clearly challenges in bringing together typically four different nationalities and cultures into one household, not having chosen each other and having to live together for three months, each person having their own foibles. For some, this aspect of accompaniment was as difficult a challenge as going out and doing the accompaniment work.

A Tulkarm EA raised lack of facility in languages as an issue:

“I don’t speak Arabic and I think it would be necessary to speak Arabic I think we should have three or six months’ Arabic to know to say though we have lessons it helps a little bit but it’s [...] an obstacle not to speak Arabic”.

Asked what role prayer, worship or spiritual disciplines had for that EA the response was, “here nothing here as a team absolutely nothing”. That said, individuals were pursuing their spiritual interests, for example through listening online to preachers or religious music, but it appeared to be an issue for them that in a placement isolated from church (other than visiting a church in Nablus as part of their service), prayer did not seem to have a formal place on the programme. This seems to go against the claim that EAPPI is involved in interchurch solidarity.

A Jayyus EA commented:

“you have many people on the programme that are not very religion-inclined”.

“Coming to a situation where people you know would be part of a church programme and say that they believe in God or not it’s challenging you don’t know whether you should say a prayer sometimes - or not or even offer to do that - so yeah for me it’s challenging and at the same time it’s a learning curve as well.”

A Yanoun EA observed that among Palestinians there was not a universal welcome for accompaniers,

“I think there are people who really want to get rid of the internationals because they think they do more harm than good.”

Another Yanoun-based EA balanced criticism of a lack of “the Christian side” with recognition that a Christian can be isolated in their normal home environment:

“maybe I’m critical on some point [*laughs*] that it’s very much it’s stressed on the political side than the Christian side so really as a Christian you feel just as lonely as you sometimes do at home.”

At the same time the possibility of this aspect of the programme being handled differently was recognised:

“there are very few that really or at least express that they have come for Christian reasons most of them are more interested in the political side of it and I think it should be combined and it could be combined.”

There was a danger of getting lost in “the political stuff” and “writing good stories” or to think only “can I get a good quote from this”. This conversation highlighted that there is a conflict between the “good story” for advocacy back home and the immediate needs of people for accompaniment:

“A good day really for the programme it’s really a day like this when nothing special is happening more than they are there all the time and watching you.”

The “watching” refers to the Israeli settlement which came as close as 400 metres away, next to the village on a hill above.

“what is difficult I think maybe more difficult than I thought before I left is this division between the two parts of the job the advocacy part all this story hunting and being more accompanier.”

This comment was made by an EA with training as a journalist.

## **5.4 Shaping the argument**

The World Council of Churches has described the EAPPI programme as a way of being faithful to a ministry of “solidarity and presence with people suffering from and affected by the occupation.”<sup>139</sup> The previous chapter concluded that EAPPI is a hybrid product of more than one narrative, and that an initial motive of ecclesiastical solidarity action gave way to a different vision of presence without taking sides, the so called “principled impartiality.” It was suggested that theology still needs to search for an effective role within EAPPI. A subordinate theology, it was claimed, is no theology at all. To find out whether the fieldwork would contradict this, a series of semi-structured interviews were conducted at all six locations where EAPPI were at work in 2009.

In the introduction to this chapter a section was included identifying some common issues with qualitative research. There is a danger of using what amounts to anecdotal evidence from a small sample to make large claims. If that is avoided, it is appropriate to ask whether there was anything in the interviews to contradict the view developed in the previous chapters that theology plays a secondary role for EAPPI. The answer is that there was not any such evidence.

Some conclusions are possible from the stories of EAs as presented here. Firstly, that EAs themselves recognised the ambiguity of their task, for instance in the question of whether their presence at checkpoints is bringing the end of the occupation closer or supporting the present system. A story from Jayyus showed a practical example where EAs were able to bring about a successful mediation. A journalist EA recognised the pressure for the “good story” and that for the people being accompanied a quiet day is better than a news day. It was possible to get behind the façade of the vetted advocacy storyline, as a number of dissonances were identified. The frailty and uncertainty of EAs was more evident than EAPPI's public messages would suggest. There was some interest in theological reflection, as with the EA

---

<sup>139</sup> *Just Peace Companion* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2011), section 28.

who had torn out and kept some of Munib Younan's theological reflections. Several found their spiritual interests lacked support from other team members, and that suggests that there is room for EAPPI to give higher priority to theological reflection.

Documents, such as the record of the 2005 workshop *Theological Reflection on Accompaniment*, and the 2011 *Just Peace Companion*, attempt to offer a theological framework for the social outreach of WCC. It is another matter to integrate theology and practice in the work of those who represent the programme in the field as EAs.

The chapter has considered evidence from EAs whose three-month period of service began in November 2009, and who were interviewed at the half-way stage of their period of service just before their Israel Experience Week.

“Stories” included examples of accompaniment practice on checkpoints at Bethlehem, Hebron and Taybe. Other stories were about visiting a village in Area C; a women’s group; a mosque and synagogue visit; a Bedouin camp; an incident involving a man with mental disabilities; conversations over tea and coffee; some reflections on gender and cultural differences; a discussion of feelings of inadequacy when nothing is helped by being there; and settler and other Israeli viewpoints. These mainly serve the purpose of showing the variety of accompaniment activity, but they also include honest comments on some of the problems. There is a recognition that accompaniment does not always have the desired positive impact, and that its purpose is not always appreciated or understood. That would be true of other kinds of intervention and is not unique to EAPPI. Given the anecdotal character of stories, and the difficulty of verification, an argument for their validity as evidence is the claim “this is what I saw.”

The “Framings” node helped to identify some of the key vocabulary that EAs use to describe their work and the context of conflict in which it is set. Examples noted included: protective presence, solidarity, being the worldwide church, acknowledging that religions are not the



base problem, looking for integrity of prayer and action, politics and human rights, apartheid, ubuntu and active nonviolence.

A subsection of "Framings" considered "Spiritual framings". Connections with local churches and Christian communities were among duties EAs were expected to fulfil. Some EAs felt that their spiritual needs were not being met, and that the team context was not a good place for this to happen. There were several comments suggesting that the balance of emphasis was upon political objectives. An EA raised the question of how to come to terms with the Old Testament in the Palestinian situation. Palestinians such as Naim Ateek have written on this, so it would be possible to put EAs in touch with his work, and others like him. Most had not made a connection between spiritual practices such as prayer or vigils and accompaniment, though perhaps this question was more appropriate to Jerusalem or Bethlehem EAs than those in Hebron, Jayyus, Tulkarm and Yanoun where the local population are almost all Muslim. It was thought to be difficult to pray together as teams because of different spiritual outlooks.

For Group 33, from whom the sample of EAs was drawn for interviewing, the main emphasis of the programme was meant to be on presence and solidarity with Palestinians suffering the effects of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories in the West Bank. Theological framing was underplayed though not totally absent.

The snapshot that emerges is of a programme that serves EAs, EAPPI and the WCC. Such help as the EAs occasionally provide for the downtrodden emerges from normal unpretentious humanity and not through any theological programme. EAPPI is "impartial" and that could be said to deny the local Christians any real support.

It might be thought a waste of time to devote more time to "theology" if theological reflection plays such a scant part in EAPPI praxis. What motivates further study is the belief that

theological reflection can offer EAPPI an opportunity to reflect on itself in the light of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. As a Christian programme this possibility always remains open.

If EAPPI is engaged in writing out the “dissonances” from the programme narrative, that contributes to sustaining a questionable praxis. A different theological framing could help EAPPI to be more open to dialogue with other viewpoints, rather than spinning stories and experiences to fit a pre-determined narrative.

## CHAPTER 6                      USES OF SCRIPTURES

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter considers uses of scriptures by various actors in the Israeli Palestinian conflict, the context of EAPPI accompaniment. Scripture is understood here in a broad sense meaning authoritative texts, not limited to biblical texts but including the Bible where relevant to a particular example.<sup>140</sup> The aim is to show how these texts are handled and that for religious and secular Jews, Christians and Muslims, there are various uses of authoritative texts not all of them compatible. These "uses of scriptures represent a spectrum of framings of the conflict. The *Theological Reflection* chapter will contain a set of scriptural reflections, but with a different purpose. In this chapter the examples are there to observe how broad is the spectrum of views and to indicate that a consensus between them is highly unlikely. Recognising diversity and trying to understand it is a prior step to considering how to deal with it, if objecting to everything that does not conform to a pre-determined narrative is rejected as unhelpful.

Following David Kelsey in *The Uses of Scripture* it is recognised here that "imaginative construal" plays a significant role in uses of scripture and that "life-relation" or "preunderstanding" of the text is also decisive.<sup>141</sup> Though scriptures provide a range of materials out of which judgements of various kinds are made, "scripture is not *decisive* precisely because the judgement is imaginative, free, creative."<sup>142</sup>

---

<sup>140</sup> The Merriam-Webster definition of *SCRIPTURE* helps to justify this broad interpretation:  
1: *a (1) capitalized* : the books of the Bible —often used in plural (2) *often capitalized* : a passage from the Bible. *b* : a body of writings considered sacred or authoritative.  
2: something written <the primitive man's awe for any *scripture* — George Santayana>,  
<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/scripture> [accessed 17 February 2015].

<sup>141</sup> David H. Kelsey, *The Uses of Scripture in Recent Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1975), p. 205.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 206.

The set of examples relate to actors in the conflict who are Jewish, Christian, Muslim or secular. The focus is phenomenological at this stage, so arguments in this chapter will not be based on presenting an alternative exegesis of texts, but rather by comparison and contrast between existing narratives.

The relationship between this scriptural line of enquiry and the research question is this: having come to the recognition that EAPPI is based on a twin narrative, part ecclesiological solidarity and part secular conflict resolution, if EAPPI's theological aspect is to gain influence it needs to locate itself in relation to the broader constellation of scripturally based attitudes to Palestine and Israel. Theological reflection on EAPPI praxis, the task of the next chapter relies on developing EAPPI's relationship to scriptures, but it is also necessary to recognise how other actors in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict handle such matters.

Robert Morgan underlines the observation by David Kelsey that the relationship of scripture to Christian theology though vital is not direct. As Morgan wrote,

‘The Bible has never of itself given birth to theology. Even its most heavily theological parts contribute to the ongoing task of Christian theology only by being interpreted in quite particular ways. Christians seek to understand their faith in part through their thoughtful engagement with the biblical texts. What they are doing needs explanation as much as the texts that they are reading.’<sup>143</sup>

If Morgan's view is accepted here, it must be recognised nevertheless that for some the link between scripture and theology is interpreted as if it were more direct, e.g. Hal Lindsey's use of biblical prophecy in *The Late Great Planet Earth*.<sup>144</sup> On the other hand *Quaker Faith and Practice* recalls George Fox at Nottingham in 1649 when he was 'made to cry out and say, 'Oh no, it is not the scriptures' [...] but I told them what it was, namely, the Holy Spirit, by which

---

<sup>143</sup> Robert Morgan, 'The Bible and Christian Theology' in John Barton, *The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 114.

<sup>144</sup> Hal Lindsey and C. C. Carlson, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1970).

the holy men of God gave forth the scriptures, whereby opinions, religions and judgments were to be tried; for it led into all Truth, and so gave the knowledge of all Truth.”<sup>145</sup>

The inclusion of insights from other religions and secular commentators does not imply a particular stance towards Christian biblical or scriptural authority. It is intended to indicate that a variety of secular and religious viewpoints are part of the context, and also that the boundary between secular and religious is often difficult to define.<sup>146</sup>

Scriptural reflection in this chapter does not rely on biblical or scriptural exegesis to make an argument (that would be theology), other than where this is integral to the example being quoted. The task is primarily descriptive, to compare and contrast, and not to build an edifice on the basis of what scripture says. Just as an ethnographical account may seek to describe the phenomena and social interactions of the group or subject being studied, the purpose here is analogous to that. By comparing different approaches it becomes clearer that that no description is without interests guiding the process.

The sources deliberately include secular and religious, male and female, Israeli and Palestinian, Jewish, Christian and Muslim sources. No priority is implied by the order in which they are presented, except where placing particular accounts next to one another helps comparison.

## 6.2 Sources

### **A religious Zionist makes a scriptural case to ‘re-settle this Land’**

---

<sup>145</sup> Britain Yearly Meeting, *Quaker Faith & Practice: The Book of Christian Discipline of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain*. (London: The Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, fifth edn., 2005), §19.24.

<sup>146</sup> Cf. D. Bonhoeffer and J. Bowden, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, (London: SCM, 2001), pp. 90-94 and 136-37. These are the letters to Eberhard Bethge of 30th April 1944 and 21 July 1944 concerning a ‘religionless Christianity’ and ‘this-worldly Christianity.’

Leah Goldsmith's account of 'Life on Itamar,' is provided on a website associated with the Jewish settlement of that name.<sup>147</sup> In the Bible, Itamar is the youngest son of the biblical figure Aaron.<sup>148</sup> Goldsmith describes Itamar's location as the 'tribunal portions of *Ephraim and Menashe*,' highlands associated with 'authentic Jewish greatness.' It can be observed that Goldsmith's biblical naming of the landscape underwrites a claim to land previously or currently in the possession of peoples who name it differently. Settler maps name the land very differently to maps that would be more familiar to the international community.<sup>149</sup> Itamar overlooks the Palestinian village of Yanoun where EAPPI maintain what they call 'protection by presence.' Goldsmith's account acknowledges that others live near Itamar, but mentions no Arabic place names. The hilltops occupied by the settlement, described by Goldsmith as a 'yishuv', come as close as 400 metres above Yanoun.<sup>150</sup> Next to Lower Yanoun is a small hill known to residents of Yanoun as Nabi Nun, a site which has meaning for both Jews and Muslims, claimed to be the burial place of Nun the father of Joshua, and said to be the site of a ruined mosque. Holy sites and scriptural references in relation to the land are not the prerogative of Jewish settlers alone.<sup>151</sup> Goldsmith chooses to mention a number of sites of Jewish religious significance, interweaving scriptural reference with the ambition that Jews would 'resettle this land.' The Bible is treated in this reflective text rather like a title deed. Geographically Itamar is not far from the Palestinian city of Nablus. Goldsmith refers to the

---

<sup>147</sup> Leah Goldsmith, 'Life on Itamar', <http://www.shechem.org/itamar/eindex.html> [accessed 11 February 2011].

<sup>148</sup> Exodus 28:1.

<sup>149</sup> A map from the Itamar website <http://www.shechem.org/itamar/emap.html> was compared with those available from the UN Office for the Coordination of Human Affairs (UNOCHA) at <http://www.ochaopt.org/mapstopic.aspx?id=108&page=1> and the Applied Research Institute in Jerusalem at <http://www.arij.org/> [accessed 7 March 2015].

<sup>150</sup> "Yishuv" is commonly used of the Jewish community in Palestine and their pioneering work before the establishment of the State of Israel. Frequent use of the term is made in B. Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited*, commencing on page 7 where he defines it simply as 'The Jewish community in Palestine.' Goldsmith uses this term to denote Jewish settlers, her contemporaries.

<sup>151</sup> Cf. Tewfik Canaan, *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries in Palestine* (Jerusalem: Ariel Publishing House, limited edn., 1980). Canaan gives an account of Islamic holy sites.

biblical name of Shechem and sees the mountains that frame it as 'the gate, the very shoulders of the Land of Israel', but Nablus is not mentioned, though it is a large town only five kilometres away. The land 'resettled' by Itamar contains springs and wells that are the 'bounty stemming from the blessing given to Joseph.' The 'local natives' (Goldsmith's way of describing the Palestinians) live on a 'different plane' and are compared to, 'the Canaani, the Perizzi and the Chitti'.<sup>152</sup> The *italics* are mine, intended to highlight the main scriptural allusions, and footnotes have been added where biblical references are easily identified. The 'Life on Itamar' webpage is illustrated with colour photographs of landscape, children from the 'yishuv', and animals both wild and tame, presenting an idyllic scene.

'Yishuv Itamar is located in the Gav Hahar region, or literally, "the Hump of the Mountain". It is *hill country*,<sup>153</sup> tremendously big, picturesque and mysterious, varied with long and wide valleys who resemble a mosaic *coat of many colors* ranging from pea to deep jade greens and chestnut browns in the winter and spring months.<sup>154</sup> In the summertime the colors are dry, like the colors of *Rebecca's jug, in which she served Eliezer and the camels in Babylon*.<sup>155</sup>

There are springs and wells in the hills. The bounty stemming from *the blessing given to Joseph...."The blessings of the father are potent above the blessings of my progenitors to the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills"* (Vayechi 49).<sup>156</sup> The tribal portions of *Ephraim and Menashe, the sons of Joseph* run across these highlands.<sup>157</sup> In every direction that one looks, the views are emanated with authentic biblical greatness and Jewish nobility. This is the chief feature of the landscape, of your life in it, and you are struck by the feeling of having lived here in the past.

When we made aliyah to Itamar 15 years ago by Divine Providence, a strong vibe pervaded the air - here I am, where I ought to be.<sup>158</sup>

---

<sup>152</sup> Judges 3:5, 'So the Israelites lived among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.'

<sup>153</sup> The 'hill country' was the territory through which the biblical patriarchs came.

<sup>154</sup> This is a reference to Joseph's coat. Cf. Genesis 37:3.

<sup>155</sup> Genesis 24:16ff.

<sup>156</sup> 'Vayechi' is the last Torah portion in Genesis commencing at chapter 47:28. The blessings of Joseph are given in Genesis 49:25-6. The quotation here is from Genesis 49:26.

<sup>157</sup> Genesis 48:8ff.

<sup>158</sup> 'Aliyah' is a term for immigration to Israel. See also fn. 175.

Gav Hahar is crowned by two noble peaks that rise 3,000 feet above the surrounding country, the mountains of the Blessing and the Curse- *Har Gerizzim and Har Eval*.<sup>159</sup> They sometimes resemble twin *Mount Sinais* simmering in a purple Holy haze of splendor, the gray, jagged rocks breaking through on the Eval side, and majestic forests waving on the Gerizzim. You cannot imagine why G-d created these mountains for any reason in the world than just to be the gate, the very shoulders of the Land of Israel, with *Shechem* (literally-shoulder) resting in the valley.<sup>160</sup>

In the winter, the winds blow incessantly here. They strike the sides of the mountains and hills and blow against the windowpanes of our homes. Sometimes the houses shudder from it. The clouds, which travel with the wind, release the blessings of the dew and the bounty, *the blessings of Joseph*.<sup>161</sup> Huge droplets of rain pour down the little streets of the yishuv and form little temporary streams and pools. The sky can become very gray and dark with a range of gray clouds and you remember *Noach sheltering his family in the ark*.<sup>162</sup> In fact, the most rain falls in these parts. That is the way it usually is, when the blessings are given. *When Joseph was thrown again into the pit*<sup>163</sup>, the skies suddenly cleared and the grounds await. It is a drought year. But, even so, the fields are full of scarlet poppies and blue pansies. The deer run free in these parts and skip from hill to dale.

Interestingly enough, not many Jews have come to *resettle this Land*<sup>164</sup>. It is still a hidden place to most. In all Gav Hahar there are no more than 500 families. They are spread upon these ancient mountains, Harey Kedem, sparsely. There are 4 yishuvim, Itamar, Bracha - situated on the mountain of the Blessing, Yitzhar, and Elon Moreh. Each yishuv has a panorama unique to its position on the "hump of the Mountain".

Elon Moreh sloping off to the north and the famous portion of the *daughters of Zlofchad*,<sup>165</sup> Yitzhar, to the west and a breathtaking view of the *Great Sea*, Bracha- upon the whole of Gav Hahar, and Itamar to the east, to *the Jordan*.<sup>166</sup>

---

<sup>159</sup> Cf. Deuteronomy 11:29; 27:2; Joshua 8:33; and Judges 9:7, which mentions Shechem.

<sup>160</sup> Jacob comes to Shechem and buys a portion of land in Genesis 33:18f., and there are other references to Shechem in Genesis, Numbers, Joshua and Judges, 1 Kings, 1 Chronicles, Psalms and Jeremiah.

<sup>161</sup> Genesis 49:25-26.

<sup>162</sup> Genesis 7:13.

<sup>163</sup> This is a reference to drought. Cf. Genesis 37:24 (*The Jewish Study Bible*) '...and took him and cast him into the pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it.'

<sup>164</sup> See the first chapter of Joshua.

<sup>165</sup> In Numbers 36, family heads in the clan of the descendants of Gilead appeal to Moses concerning the inheritance of the descendants of Zelophehad, who had only daughters. They are allowed to inherit as long as they marry into a clan of their father's tribe. Numbers 36:7, 'No inheritance in Israel is to pass from one tribe to another, for every Israelite shall keep the tribal inheritance of their ancestors' (this judgement is repeated in verse 9). Numbers 36:10, 'The daughters of Zelophehad did as the LORD had commanded Moses.'

<sup>166</sup> Daniel 7:2 refers to the 'great sea' i.e. the Mediterranean.



Before the recent intifada AlAksa, some curious Tel-Avivers would drive out in their 4x4's to catch the breath of this land that reaches beyond time and space. That has stopped now. We, the local settlers, are inquisitive about any vehicle that is not a bulletproof bus on these roads. At times, life on the yishuv seems like that of a hermit, with the stillness of the night sometimes so out of the ordinary. But, all of the time you can feel the overshadowed existence of the local natives, much like *the Canaani, the Perizzi and the Chitti*, running parallel with your own but on a completely different plane.<sup>167</sup> You can't help but wonder, when will this end? The echoes of our ancestors, the echoes of the screams of Joseph call out from the nearby pit, and you can hear "Ode Yoseph Chay".<sup>168</sup> History and the future whisper in the spring wind. They console. They inspire.

It is only a matter of time that Joseph returns. "*And you shall dwell in the Land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your G-d.*"<sup>169</sup>

It can be seen that biblical references in this text are extensive and the use of scripture serves to support the settlers' cause. The mention of 'the Canaani, the Perizzi and the Chitti,' seems to imply that the Palestinian presence is transient and that settlers who first arrived here in 1984 will inherit the land.<sup>170</sup>

We can take this to be a text representing one particular kind of religious Zionism, though it should not be assumed that every Jewish settler thinks alike. It is informed with a colonialist mentality throughout, and attempts to define "the others" in terms that are imported. There is no attempt whatsoever at encountering the other - or the presence of God in the other.

#### **A secular Zionist who works for peaceful co-existence**

Gershon Baskin, though secular, has a close relationship to Judaism, and advocates both for Zionism and the rights of Palestinians in Israel and the occupied territories. He has written of

---

<sup>167</sup> Exodus 3:8, 'and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.'

<sup>168</sup> Strong's concordance, 2417, 'chay: living'.

<sup>169</sup> Ezekiel 36:28.

<sup>170</sup> A *Wikipedia* article on Itamar indicates that Itamar was established in 1984 and originally called *Tel Chaim*. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Itamar> [accessed 4 March 2015].

his experiences as the initiator and negotiator of the secret back channel for the release of Gilad Schalit, an Israeli soldier who was held as a long term captive in the Gaza Strip.<sup>171</sup>

In relation to the Israeli Palestinian conflict Baskin is conciliatory. He is co-chairman along with a Palestinian counterpart of IPCRI, Israel Palestine Creative Regional Initiatives,<sup>172</sup> a non-governmental organisation that acts as a political think tank and advocates democratic and peaceful coexistence as the outcome of a two-state solution.

As a journalist Baskin writes a long-running column for the *Jerusalem Post* newspaper called 'Encountering Peace'. One such article entitled 'Defining who we are' is discussed here. The *Jerusalem Post* article is not quoted in full on the assumption that it is readily available for those who wish to consult it.<sup>173</sup>

The article reveals that Baskin made aliya in 1978 having already fulfilled leadership positions in the Zionist youth movement Young Judea.<sup>174</sup> Though defining himself as secular he helped to establish the progressive Kol Haneshama synagogue in Jerusalem, acting as chairman and attending prayers every Shabbat for some three years, despite defining himself as an atheist. A survey by the Guttman Institute shows that the phenomenon of secular Israeli Jews who are in some ways religiously observant is well attested in Israel.<sup>175</sup>

---

<sup>171</sup> Gershon Baskin, *The Negotiator: Freeing Gilad Shalit from Hamas* (Milford, CT: The Toby Press, 2013).

<sup>172</sup> IPCRI stands for Israel Palestine Creative Regional Initiatives, and was formerly known as Israel/Palestine Centre for Research and Information.

<sup>173</sup> Gershon Baskin, 'Encountering Peace: Defining Who We Are', *The Jerusalem Post*, (26 November 2014).

<sup>174</sup> 'Aliya' is the Hebrew term for 'going up', a word that can mean going up to Jerusalem on pilgrimage (as in the Psalms of Ascent, Psalms 120-134). Since the establishment of the Zionist movement and the State of Israel it has meant the programme of enabling Jews from around the world to settle in Israel under the 'right of return.'

<sup>175</sup> Asher Arian, Raphael Ventura and Michael Philippov, 'Israeli Secularism in the Guttman Centre Polls 1990-2008'. (The Israel Democracy Institute, 2008), <https://en.idi.org.il/articles/9947> [accessed 26th March 2017].

Baskin describes how his children have absorbed a Jewish education, preparing for their bar mitzvah at Kol Haneshema synagogue, though they remain a secular family. Here Baskin spells out his identity:

“When I try to explain to non-Jewish friends, particularly Palestinians or other Arabs, what it means for me to be Jewish, I completely confuse them (which is what I want to do). I tell them that I do not believe in God and I do not practice Judaism religiously, but am very Jewish. I am a son of the Jewish people, a product of Jewish history, a part of Jewish presence in the land of the Jewish people.

My language is Hebrew and my culture is Israeli. I live in Israel because Israel is my home – my home by choice.

Israel is the home of the Jewish people. Israel is the nation state of the Jewish people. I identify with our flag. I sing our national anthem with emotion – chills up my spine. I get excited flying home from abroad when I see the Israeli coast line. I am very glad that Israel exists and that I am an Israeli.”

Although he greatly values the Israeli Declaration of Independence Baskin nevertheless opposes newly proposed “Jewish state laws.” He insists that, “Israel must be defined as the nation state of the Jewish people and all of its citizens. There is no other possible definition if Israel is to call itself a democracy.” This secular Israeli says, “I hope and pray that the Palestinian state will have a Jewish minority and that it will decide to define itself as the nation state of the Palestinian people and all of its citizens.”

As regards scriptural reflection, Baskin affirms the place in family life of the synagogue (he helped to found one), the Torah and the sermon (his children read and preached at their bar mitzvah). He values the markers of Jewish identity, even if for him this identity does not include belief in God. Religion and scripture are deeply engrained in Israeli society so that even those who claim to be secular continue with a number of scripturally based religious practices. Baskin’s Jewish and Zionist identity leads him in a very different direction to the settlers of Itamar. His markers are the modern nation state and democracy, not a God-given entitlement to land.

**Left, Right, secular and religious - categories that oversimplify**

In an excerpt from her book *Unsettling Gaza*, psychologist and cultural anthropologist Joyce Dalsheim unpacks the meaning of some of the categories associated with secularity and religiosity in Israel. She does not offer scriptural reflection as such but usefully shows the diversity of opinions among Israelis on this issue.

‘The “Left” of Israeli Zionist politics emerged from the socialist or labor Zionist movement in Europe in response to a growing sense that Jews could never become fully assimilated or fully accepted in Europe. Today, it tends to be associated with a liberal or secular humanism, with the secular kibbutz movement, and with what is known as the “peace camp” in Israel. It generally includes those Israelis who are opposed to the occupation of territories gained in the 1967 war. This Left however, is not necessarily exclusively secular. It includes shades and variations of secularity and religiosity, including some Orthodox Jews, particularly those often called “modern Orthodox” which is another category including variations but is generally viewed as distinctive from Haredi or ultra-Orthodox Jews.

The “Right,” on the other hand, which cannot be divorced from modern discourses of liberalism, is historically associated with a more hawkish position, with the Revisionist Zionism of Ze’ev Jabotinsky that later became the Likud party, and with a belief in the right of the Jewish people to establish a state on what is known as “greater Israel” or “the whole of Israel” (*Eretz Israel ha-Shlema*). This position has historically been opposed to relinquishing territory (following the 1967 war) and has often been aligned with more traditional or religious Jews who share a belief in the right of Jews to settle on the ancient biblical Land of Israel. Of course, the Right is not exclusively the domain of the religious and includes versions and shades of religiosity and secularity. In addition, there is an Orthodox Jewish community that rejects modern political Zionism and therefore does not fit into the left-right spectrum of Israeli politics.

Secular, anti-or non-Zionist Jewish Israelis are categorized as the far or radical Left. It is also important to note that ethnicity, class, and other dimensions of social identity further complicate these categories. There are, of course, many nuances, differences, and even seemingly contradictory positions within each category [...].<sup>176</sup>

The earlier Baskin example has shown that Israelis claiming a secular or atheist identity tend to engage in religious practices. Dalsheim seeks to give a nuanced account of Israeli society by showing that a binary division between secular Left and a religious Right in Israeli politics is an oversimplification. The existence of an Orthodox Jewish community that ‘rejects modern political Zionism,’ and others who oppose the continued occupation of territories gained in

---

<sup>176</sup> Joyce Dalsheim, *Unsettling Gaza: Secular Liberalism, Radical Religion, and the Israeli Settlement Project* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 15.

1967, shows that scriptural reflection can lead in very different directions, and that there are many subdivisions within the categories Dalsheim describes.

**Biblical scholarship tends to sidestep colonialism.**

The late Michael Prior (1942-2004) was a Roman Catholic Vincentian priest who chaired the Holy Land Research Project at the Department of Theology and Religious Studies, St Mary's College (University of Surrey). He is best known for, *The Bible and Colonialism*, a book which includes a moral critique of conventional biblical studies.<sup>177</sup> Prior observes that scholars often pay scant attention to the ethical dimensions of discussion of the land of Canaan and instead biblical studies tend to specialise in questions of historicity or literary criticism.<sup>178</sup> A flavour of Prior's approach can be found in the abstract of his article, 'Ethnic Cleansing and the Bible: a Moral Critique.'<sup>179</sup>

'Even for secular Zionists, Jewish claims to exclusive title to 'the land of Israel' rest on the Bible. Although Political Zionism was an assault on Judaism, its settlement policy today has no more ardent supporters than Religious Zionists. The Bible salves whatever pangs of conscience they might have about the expulsion of the Palestinians: normal rules of morality are suspended, and ethnic cleansing is applauded. However, the Bible's land traditions pose fundamental moral questions, relating both to their content—they mandate the ethnic cleansing of Canaan—and to the ways they have been deployed in favour of various colonial enterprises, including Zionism. Nevertheless, neither has been sufficient to bother the biblical academy to the point of critical opposition. Academics have an ethical responsibility, and are accountable to a wider public. This essay proposes that a moral exegesis of the Bible and an ethical evaluation of its interpretation, not least as it refers to the Holy Land, is indispensable today.'

Duncan Macpherson, who worked closely with Prior, observed that this remarkable priest and campaigner for justice had a contradictory relationship with scripture. On the one hand he

---

<sup>177</sup> Michael Prior, *The Bible and Colonialism: A Moral Critique* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997).

<sup>178</sup> Michael Prior, *The Bible and Colonialism*, p. 12.

<sup>179</sup> Michael Prior, 'Ethnic Cleansing and the Bible: A Moral Critique', *Holy Land Studies*, 1.1 (2002), 37-59.

was a distinguished New Testament critic who found a hunger for justice from the Bible, yet on the other hand, 'he came to see the Bible as having served, and continuing to serve, the interests of colonialism and oppression.'<sup>180</sup>

Prior pointed to Old Testament texts invoked to justify colonialism and, in particular, the colonial oppression of the Palestinians. Macpherson observes that others have underlined texts in the New Testament used to justify anti-Semitism. Opinion divides between blaming the interpreters and blaming the texts themselves, usually by questioning their historicity.'<sup>181</sup>

Prior's approach to scriptural reflection applies a hermeneutic of suspicion to any text or interpretation that is used to support colonialism. There are other such voices including R. S. Sugirtharajah, to whom further reference will be made.<sup>182</sup>

#### **An approach to New Testament ethics that confronts anti-Judaism and ethnic conflict**

Richard Hays in his *Moral Vision of the New Testament* offers an account of the relationship of Judaism and Christianity in which they ultimately share together as the 'Israel of God.'<sup>183</sup> This may be contrasted with the Ruethers' *The Wrath of Jonah* quoted next in this series of examples, where it is denied that Jesus is the Messiah of Israel. Hays maintains that the 'Israel of God' of Romans 11:26 and Galatians 6:16 are,

'the elect eschatological people of God consisting of Jews and Gentiles together in Christ. [...] Christians must maintain toward the Jewish people the delicately balanced dialectical

---

<sup>180</sup> Duncan Macpherson, 'Michael Prior, the Bible and Anti-Semitism', *Holy Land Studies*, 6.2 (2007), 145.

<sup>181</sup> Cf. Keith W. Whitelam, *The Invention of Ancient Israel: The Silencing of Palestinian History* (London: Routledge, 1996).

<sup>182</sup> R. S. Sugirtharajah, *The Bible and the Third World: Precolonial, Colonial and Postcolonial Encounters*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). Cf. p. 153f of this dissertation.

<sup>183</sup> Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation; A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* (London: HarperCollins, 1996).

position that Paul describes, simultaneously acknowledging their peculiar status as God's beloved people and yet hoping for their ultimate salvation in Christ.'<sup>184</sup>

The Ruethers, on the other hand, counter any attempt at a replacement theology, seeing it as one of the roots of the holocaust.

Hays maintains that, 'the New Testament can be shown in quite a powerful way to present an argument for the transcending of ethnic division *within the church*.' When Peter at Antioch withdrew from table fellowship with Gentile Christians, Paul opposed him to his face not only because of the 'social affront' but also, 'as a betrayal of the truth of the Gospel (Gal. 2:11-14).'

Hays maintains that, 'the New Testament makes a compelling case for the church to live as a community that transcends racial and ethnic differences.'<sup>185</sup>

Hays' argument then progresses to making a case against ethnic tensions that are not internal to the church. 'Once the church has caught the vision of living as a sign of the new creation in which racial and ethnic divisions are bridged at the table of the Lord, how is it possible for the community of Christ's people to participate in animosity towards "outsiders"?' The church is called to a 'ministry of reconciliation' (2 Cor. 5:17-20).<sup>186</sup> There are more voices of this kind, such as Lamin Sanneh who is strong in relation to crossing ethnic and cultural boundaries.<sup>187</sup>

### **Christian self-deception in relation to Judaism, the holocaust and replacement theology**

Rosemary Radford Ruether and Herman J. Ruether in *The Wrath of Jonah* examine, as a part of their study, Jewish and Christian responses to the Holocaust, Rosemary writing as a Professor of Theology in Illinois, and Herman as a political scientist and former acting director of the

---

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., p. 417.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid., p. 441.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., p. 441.

<sup>187</sup> Lamin O. Sanneh, *Translating the message: the missionary impact on culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2009).

Palestinian Human Rights Campaign.<sup>188</sup> They argue against a replacement theology in which Jesus is the Messiah of Israel, and Torah observance is suppressed. They regard the Jewish no to the Christian gospel as 'a witness to the truth, recalling Christianity to its true identity.'<sup>189</sup> They continue, saying:

'The culmination of this Christian self-deception, expressed in hostility to Jews, was the Holocaust. But this was simply the extreme expression of a root error, going back to a foundational misunderstanding that appeared as Christianity became a Gentile movement in the second century. Van Buren does not allow that this error appears in the New Testament itself. He contends that, rightly interpreted, the New Testament, including Paul, supports his reading of the auxiliary relationship of the Christian mission to the Gentiles to the one covenant of God with Israel.

Jesus is central for Christianity, but not as the Messiah of Israel or as the basis of a new covenant superseding that of God with Israel. Rather, Jesus is the paradigmatic expression of the covenant of God with Israel for Gentiles. It is where Israel is summed up and given to Gentiles. Gentiles plug into the covenant of God with Israel through Jesus. Therefore, he is central for our salvation, but he is not necessary for the salvation of Jews, who are this covenant themselves.'

There are many possible responses to the Holocaust, and this is one that relies on a reorientation of Christianity on a huge scale, reassessing much of Christian history and theology.

Acceptance of this auxiliary relationship to Judaism is the prelude to the Ruethers' critique of the State of Israel. They defend themselves against the accusation of Christian anti-Semitism saying that the political morality expected of Israel is the same as 'any state in the community of nations that seeks to overcome the heritage of colonialism and to establish a minimally just global social order.'<sup>190</sup>

---

<sup>188</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether and Herman J. Ruether, *The Wrath of Jonah: the crisis of religious nationalism in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict*. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., 2002).

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., p. 211.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., p. 214.



This excerpt is included not because it does justice to the immense influence of the Holocaust on modern Judaism, the State of Israel and the Israeli Palestinian conflict, something impossible to discuss in so short a space, but because it draws attention to these issues, and the possibility of alternative ways of addressing the relationship of Christians and Jews. As such it stands for other accounts that seek to address the same issues in a variety of other ways.

### **A Palestinian Christian view of scripture**

Naim Ateek, founder and recently retired director of the Sabeel Centre for Palestinian Liberation is a Christian Palestinian who has lived most of his life in Palestine Israel. Sabeel's 9<sup>th</sup> International Conference held in Jerusalem focussed on the theme of *The Bible and the Palestine Israel Conflict*.<sup>191</sup> Contributors from around the world with different attitudes to scripture contributed on the theme of 'The Occupation of the Bible,' before moving on to consider 'Realities on the Ground', 'International Law', 'Contemporary Issues' and 'Remembering and Looking Forward.'

In this excerpt it is Ateek's best known work, *Justice and only justice*, that provides the text.<sup>192</sup> Ateek detects 'three distinct streams of tradition flowing from the Hebrew Scriptures.' These three are 'nationalist, Torah-oriented and prophetic'.

"The source of inspiration for the nationalist tradition came largely from those books of the Bible that are commonly referred to as the earlier, or former, prophets: Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings. These books are characterized by their favourable reporting of the use of force to achieve the Israelites' national goals. The later proponents of this tradition believed that the Jews had a special, privileged relationship with God. Yahweh was their God in a unique sense: they recalled God's mighty acts in the past and were determined to realize the same acts in the present. The past had become idealized and they believed that it could be reclaimed. they

---

<sup>191</sup> *The Bible and the Palestine Israel Conflict*, ed. by Naim Ateek, Cedar Duaybis and Tina Whitehead (Jerusalem: Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre, 2014).

<sup>192</sup> Naim Ateek, *Justice, and Only Justice: A Palestinian Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990).

refused to accept the reality of their relative weakness vis-a-viz the great power of the day, Rome.”<sup>193</sup>

The source of inspiration for the Torah-oriented tradition was received from the books of the Law and from its observance. The major adherents of this tradition were the Pharisees.<sup>194</sup>

Ateek sees Torah-centred Judaism that rejects the military option as a response to the destruction of the Temple in AD 70 and the final collapse of the Zealots in 135.

“Religious belief rather than political power began to be the cement that held Jewish society together, especially in the diaspora. When that happened, it would be by spiritual, divine intervention and by “no human hand”. [...] This gradually gave birth to Rabbinic Judaism, which produced the Talmud and the Mishnah. [...] Its concept of God at times betrayed exclusivity. With the emancipation from ghetto life in Europe and the influence of the Enlightenment, some Jews, especially in Germany, began to stress the universalist character of Judaism. The epitome of this was the emergence of Reform Judaism, which considered the core of Judaism to be its code of ethics, morality, and justice.”<sup>195</sup>

Ateek argues here for a development from narrow nationalism, to a Torah-based option that held Judaism together through religious belief, moving towards a more universal code of justice. The third stream of tradition is the one that he finds most conducive to his own viewpoint. This is the prophetic tradition. Among much material that is ‘narrow, nationalist and exclusive,’ Ateek finds the later prophets capable of ‘profound trust about the universal and inclusive nature of God.’<sup>196</sup>

Jonah is singled out as ‘one of the strongest voices against an exclusive view of God’.

‘Jonah was ready to accept God’s mercy as long as it applied to himself and no one else. In fact he was ready to choose death rather than acknowledge God’s mercy for others. The message of the book of Jonah is a powerful one, having to do with God’s mercy on Israel’s staunchest enemy, the Assyrians. The best illustrations for the inclusive nature of God, however are given by the prophets, who saw God as a God of justice and

---

<sup>193</sup> Naim Ateek, *Justice, and Only Justice*, p. 94.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., pp. 94-5.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., p. 95.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., p. 96.

righteousness who demands ethical living of all nations. So Amos pronounced God's judgment on Moab for atrocities committed not against Israel, but against Edom.'

Ateek sees Jesus as a proponent of the prophetic tradition, and after him the church, though it was capable of straying from his message. On this usage of scripture there is a development by stages towards greater inclusivity and demands for justice. Ateek's position is presented as sitting at the summit of this development, though at the same time he is saying with whom in Israel he might collaborate.

### **The forms and influence of Christian Zionism**

In *Christian Zionism: road-map to Armageddon?* Stephen Sizer identifies six theological convictions held by Christian Zionists resulting from a 'literal and futurist reading of the Bible.'<sup>197</sup> He recognises that not all Christian Zionists hold all these views or with the same enthusiasm, but underlines the political consequences of their holding such views which he expresses in forthright terms that betray his strong opposition to these standpoints:

- '1. The belief that the Jews remain God's chosen people leads Christian Zionists to seek to bless Israel in material ways. However this invariably results in uncritical endorsement of and justification for Israel's racist and apartheid policies, in the media, among politicians and through solidarity tours to Israel.
2. As God's chosen people, the final restoration of the Jews to Israel is, therefore, actively encouraged and facilitated through partnerships between Christian organisations and the Jewish Agency.
3. Eretz Israel, as delineated in Scripture, belongs exclusively to the Jewish people, therefore the land must be annexed and the settlements adopted and strengthened.
4. Jerusalem is regarded as the eternal and exclusive capital of the Jews, and cannot be shared with the Palestinians. Therefore, strategically, Western governments are placed under pressure by Christian Zionists to relocate their embassies to Jerusalem and thereby recognize the fact.
5. The third temple has yet to be built, the priesthood consecrated and sacrifices reconstituted. As dispensational Christian Zionists, in particular, believe this is prophesied, they offer varying degrees of support to the Jewish Temple Mount organizations committed to achieving it.

---

<sup>197</sup> S. Sizer, *Christian Zionism: Road Map to Armageddon?* (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004).

6. Since Christian Zionists are convinced there will be an apocalyptic war between good and evil in the near future, there is no prospect for lasting peace between Jews and Arabs. Indeed, to advocate that Israel compromise with Islam or coexist with Palestinians is to identify with those destined to oppose God and Israel in the imminent battle of Armageddon.

In recent years Sizer, a conservative evangelical Anglican vicar, has become a controversial figure himself.<sup>198</sup> His six points remain a useful summary of commonly held Christian Zionist beliefs.

### **What possibilities are there to interpret the 'undisputed reference point' of the Qur'an?**

Farid Esack is a Muslim scholar, speaker and human rights activist who has lectured on religion and Islamic Studies, an unusual example of a pluralistic thinker within Islam. He was a Commissioner for Gender Equality with Nelson Mandela's government. Esack also took part in the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre's 6<sup>th</sup> international conference in Jerusalem in 2001 when he spoke alongside Dr Azmi Bishara on 'Countering Apartheid'. This excerpt is from his book *On Being a Muslim*.<sup>199</sup>

On the subject of the debate that took place during the preparation of a constitution for the new South Africa, Esack writes under the heading, 'Tell us about your glasses'.<sup>200</sup> He says, 'If we can have clarity as to where we stand regarding the underlying ideological/theological assumptions that shape our religious views, then we will reach the core of the issue: religion has not only been a tool in battles, it is itself a battleground.'<sup>201</sup> Later he turns more directly to reflecting on the influence of scripture in the political realm:

---

<sup>198</sup> John Bingham, *The Daily Telegraph* Religious Affairs Editor, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/11399986/Vicar-who-blamed-Israel-for-911-attacks-is-banned-from-writing-about-the-Middle-East.html> (9 February 2015) [accessed 20 March 2017].

<sup>199</sup> Farid Esack, *On Being a Muslim: Finding a Religious Path in the World Today* (Oxford, Oneworld, 1999).

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., p. 168.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., p. 168.

'Suppose a miracle takes place and we actually agree on one sacred scripture. We will still end up with the problem of people and their very different ways of seeing things. There is the question of text and that of context. What did a particular word mean in the original language? What did it mean to its first hearers or readers? What was the context of this revelation? About whom was it revealed? Is it a general or specific rule? Is the application of the rule significant or the underlying principle? Is the text abrogated or not? These are questions that have vexed exegetes for centuries. It does seem rather unfair to expect political leaders to sort out more than two thousand years of diverse exegetical opinions on diverse religious scriptures.

It is, of course, true that some may claim there is no question of interpretation. These people usually imply that the only true meaning is actually their interpretation. This understanding of scripture, I suggest, has more to do with battles for political control over the minds of ordinary believers than with any serious theological thinking. While the relatively common experiences of people may minimize their divergent outlooks in different historical periods, diversity is never negated.

The absolute and undisputed reference point for Muslims is the Qur'an and, for Sunni Muslims, the Prophet's definitive conduct. The unavoidable point of departure from which these criteria are approached, however, is one's self and the conditions wherein that self is located. Ignoring the ambiguities of language and history and their impact on interpretation results in there being no effective distinction between normative Islamic morality and what the believer 'thinks' it to be. Both traditionalism and fundamentalism deny any personal or historical frame of reference in the first instance. While they will insist that normative Islamic morality is 'to be judged solely by the Qur'an and the Prophet's conduct' throughout their discourse they simultaneously imply 'and we are the only ones who have correctly understood it.'<sup>202</sup>

Esack explores, with some humour, the issue of an Islamic radio station that pursued a mini jihad in which women's silence on the airwaves was decreed to be a fundamental issue in Islamic law. The station eventually relented and agreed to the phasing in of women's voices so that they would eventually get four hours a day. Thus it appeared that a fundamental religious issue could change in the space of a few months. In the light of his South African experience Esack holds to the view that, 'there can be no safe haven for those who continue to believe that one human, by accident of race or gender, is superior to another.'<sup>203</sup>

### **A secular critique of orientalism**

---

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., p. 172.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., p. 176.

Edward Said (1935-2003), was a secular Palestinian with a Christian upbringing, who is best known for his influential book *Orientalism*, and for his love of music which led him to found with Daniel Barenboim the West/Eastern Divan Orchestra.<sup>204</sup> He was a skilled literary critic, as evidenced by this excerpt from his introduction to Erich Auerbach's *Mimesis*. Said expresses appreciation for Auerbach's treatment of the Old Testament story of Abraham and Isaac for beautifully demonstrating how it is,

“like a silent progress through the indeterminate and the contingent, a holding of the breath... the overwhelming suspense is present. ... The personages speak in the Bible story too; but their speech does not serve, as does speech in Homer, to manifest, to externalise thoughts – on the contrary, it serves to indicate thoughts which remain unexpressed. ... [There is an] externalization of only so much of the phenomena as is necessary for the purpose of the narrative, all else left in obscurity; the decisive points of the narrative alone are emphasized, what lies beneath is non-existent; time and space are undefined and call for interpretation; thoughts and feelings remain unexpressed, are only suggested by silence and the fragmentary speeches; the whole is permeated with the most unrelieved suspense and directed toward a single goal (and to that extent far more of a unity), remains mysterious and ‘fraught with background’” (11-12). [...] The Old Testament figures, including God, are heavy with the implication of extending into the depths of time, space, and consciousness, hence of character, and therefore require a much more concentrated, intense act of attention from the reader.<sup>205</sup>

Edward Said notes how the Old Testament came to be regarded as a figural representation of the New Testament, commenting, ‘At last we begin to see, like interpretation itself, how history does not only move forward but also backward, in each oscillation between eras managing to accomplish a greater realism, a more substantial “thickness” (to use a term from current anthropological description), a higher degree of truth.’

### 6.3 Chapter summary

---

<sup>204</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1978). For information on the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra see <http://www.west-eastern-divan.org/> [accessed 7 March 2015].

<sup>205</sup> Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, fiftieth Anniversary edition with a new introduction by Edward W. Said, (Woodstock: Princeton University Press, 1953, 2003).

In the first example of Leah Goldsmith scripture is almost woven into the land in the cartography, and a deep emotion can be sensed in the way her account of Itamar is written. The second example, Gershon Baskin complicates the categories by showing that a secular Israeli can be quite religiously engaged, and he almost delights in confusing with the complexity of his identity, enabling him to inhabit the boundaries between conflicted communities. Dalsheim rejects a simplistic division of Israeli society into secular left and religious right. Michael Prior's critique of colonialism in the Bible and among biblical scholars recognises the difficulty presented by the Hebrew scriptures to Palestinians, and Duncan Macpherson comments that the New Testament faces accusations of anti-Semitism. Attacking the historicity of awkward texts is a strategy that is sometimes used. Hays and the Ruethers present incompatible accounts of the Christian relationship to Judaism, the Ruethers making a strong accusation that replacement theology bears some of the responsibility for the holocaust. Naim Ateek argues that there has been a development in scripture from nationalism to a prophetic commitment to universality and the demand for justice, progressing towards Ateek's own position in *Justice and only Justice*. Stephen Sizer negotiates the complexities of Christian Zionism. Farid Esack shows that despite the description of the Qur'an as 'undisputed reference point,' his South African experience shows that it is possible to move in the direction of equality. Edward Said's critique of the western tendency to orientalism helps to raise the question of who benefits, who is empowered, by presenting narratives in a particular way. It was Farid Esack who observed that even to agree on one sacred scripture would be a miracle.

## **6.4 Shaping the argument**

EAPPI must accept that it is one among many competing voices when it comes to scriptural reflection, and that reading its narrative into scripture will not help. That would put it on a par with many others who seem to do just that. Part of the task of developing a theology of

accompaniment is to frame it in such a way that it addresses the competing claims to authority on the issues of the Israeli Palestinian conflict. To do so EAPPI needs not only its own tradition of scriptural interpretation, but a willingness to engage with those who hold contrary views.

A lesson to be carried forward from this chapter is the importance of finding a way to use scriptures that does not rest content with searching it for EAPPI's pre-determined message.

The chapter illustrates how scriptures are used selectively in support of different and sometimes incompatible viewpoints, and that although some convergence may be possible, a consensus view on how scriptures relate to Palestine/Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is highly unlikely. There remains a possibility of using scriptures as a basis for dialogue. Scriptures are decisive in the way they are employed by particular communities of understanding. Gaining a better understanding of how partners in dialogue use their scriptures enhances the possibilities for dialogue.

How EAPPI is located in relation to a broader constellation of attitudes to scriptures is identifiable by mapping alternatives. The range of viewpoints illustrated in this chapter include: religious Zionist; secular Zionist; a challenge not to oversimplify the left/right divide; colonialist attitudes; Judaism and Christianity sharing together as the "Israel of God"; responses to the Shoah; replacement theology; Palestinian Christian theology; various forms of Christian Zionism; Qur'anic reference points; a secular critique of orientalism.

Recognising the complexity of different viewpoints should lead EAPPI to admit that there is some arbitrariness to its own scriptural claims, but this should not prevent EAPPI from developing its own position(s) in relation to scriptures. EAPPI needs the broader humanitarian tradition of rights and International Humanitarian Law to assist with this. Both the attitude that use of scriptures are the cause of conflict, or that religion is irrelevant to the conflict can be challenged. EAPPI should take scriptures and theologies seriously as relevant



to Palestine/Israel to enter into conversation with those who are also doing so. This sounds obvious but is neglected when attention is given to a secular narrative of human rights to the neglect of scripture and theology. This builds the case for a renewed theology and praxis for Ecumenical Accompaniment.

## CHAPTER 7 THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

### 7.1 Introduction

The dissertation began with the hypothesis that EAPPI “tends to undermine its own theological housing.” The research has used historical inquiry, textual analysis, empirical data collection and biblical and theological questioning to locate and analyse EAPPI Theory/Practice and finds that “theology” was compromised from the outset and that therefore practice goes wrong. EAPPI is weak at what should be its greatest strength, and so an Achilles Heel critique applies due to the subordinate task given to theology.<sup>206</sup> With secular and theological accounts of Theory/Practice side by side, there is a danger that “theology” is used to validate a pre-determined practice while its own distinctive contributions are overlooked.<sup>207</sup>

Building on an existing body of work including EAPPI’s own *Theological Reflection on Accompaniment*,<sup>208</sup> and the theology of a Jerusalem Church Leader closely associated with EAPPI, Bishop Munib Younan, the intention in this chapter is to supply biblical and theological reflection capable of enhancing the position of theology within EAPPI.

The study of the person and work of Jesus Christ, Immanuel God with us, raises issues of the Theory/Practice of accompaniment that would have been missed if the sources of theology

---

<sup>206</sup> *Dictionary of Critical Realism*, p. 107: ‘immanent critique (which identifies either theory-practice inconsistencies or aporiai together with their source), and *Achilles heel* (AH) critique (which identifies a weakness in a theory at what is taken to be its strongest point.’

<sup>207</sup> An example of the former is L. Mahony, *Proactive Presence: Field strategies for civilian protection*. (Geneva: Henry Dunant Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, 2006). An example of the latter is Munib Younan’s contribution to the 2005 workshop *Theological Reflection on Accompaniment* (see next footnote).

<sup>208</sup> *Theological Reflection on Accompaniment: A Workshop Organised by the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs in Partnership with Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches, Geneva, 28-30 September, 2005* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2006).

were only searched for everything that seems to confirm what EAPPI accompaniers want to say.

The next section of the chapter is a biblical reflection on Luke 24:13ff., a key text for accompaniment. That will be followed by exploration of the theology of Munib Younan followed by Miroslav Volf's theology of reconciliation illustrated by examining some themes from *Exclusion and Embrace*.<sup>209</sup> The exploration is intended to indicate that there are possibilities for strengthening EAPPI praxis when further use is made of theological reflection (TR). Looking to the broad constellation of biblical interpretation it is possible to find insights that speak to the local context.

## **7.2 Biblical Reflection: Luke 24:13ff**

The approach adopted in the Biblical section of the chapter is to examine a number of interpretations of Luke 24:13ff where Jesus accompanies two disciples on the Emmaus road on Easter Day. This shows that interpreters have a range of distinctive concerns that they bring to the text; and some of those distinctive concerns are capable of filling gaps in the EAPPI understanding of accompaniment. By noting a variety of interpretations it is hoped to avoid the danger of turning only to those interpreters who fit EAPPI's pre-determined narrative. The selection of texts is not exhaustive, but indicates the diversity of available interpretations.<sup>210</sup>

### **Introduction to Luke 24:13ff**

There are several features of this passage that make it an obvious choice when considering the theology of accompaniment. Jesus comes alongside the bewildered disciples and

---

<sup>209</sup> Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville TN: Abingdon Press, 1996).

<sup>210</sup> The selection of texts was influenced by their availability in the library of the Tantur Ecumenical Institute for Theological Studies, Jerusalem, where this part of the research took place.

accompanies them; they break bread together; they become companions, and the situation of the disciples is turned around. Munib Younan, Chair of the EAPPI Local Reference Group in Jerusalem wrote thus of Jesus and the disciples on the road to Emmaus:

‘He heard their stories and contributed to their understanding of Scriptures. He accompanied them, giving them encouragement. So accompaniment is walking together with Jesus Christ in companionship and in service to God’s mission. In walking together on the road to Emmaus, as the Lord revealed himself to his two companions, their three stories became intertwined. As their stories came together, God’s plan in Jesus’ resurrection became clearer. A new community, the Church, began to emerge in Jerusalem. In sharing a meal and breaking the bread the companions recognized the presence of Jesus with them. Accompaniment is valued for its own sake as well as for its results. It is open-ended with no foregone conclusions. The companions learn together through the journey the peace, justice and hope that God intends for humanity. Accompaniment binds companions more closely to their Lord and one another as they seek to live out this mission.’<sup>211</sup>

The definition that ‘accompaniment is walking together with Jesus Christ in companionship and in service to God’s mission’ could apply to many New Testament passages. It is less obvious that it normally applies to Ecumenical Accompaniers, who frame their understanding of accompaniment in a variety of often non-religious ways, as the *Fieldwork* helped to illustrate.

By setting this interpretation of Luke 24:13ff alongside alternative interpretations it should become clear that, like Younan, those who offer these alternatives are inclined to bring their own distinctive emphasis to the Emmaus story. A smaller number of examples would make that point. By examining a greater variety of interpretations more issues are identified that are relevant to EAPPI, and that might have been missed if using scripture to validate a pre-determined practice.

### **Ambrose**

In a reference to Luke 24, Ambrose of Milan (c. 390) notices, ‘the fire of the Lord Jesus sent upon earth’.<sup>212</sup> ‘With this fire [Jesus] inflamed the heart of His apostles, as Cleopas bears

---

<sup>211</sup> *Theological Reflection on Accompaniment*, p. 24.

<sup>212</sup> Luke 12:49, “I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled.”

witness,' and 'truly they were wings of fire.'<sup>213</sup> Ambrose takes this to be a purifying fire and advises seeking out the higher regions and cleansing the soul of all that is base. When Ambrose advocated purification in the quest for God this did not prevent him pursuing political goals such as the independence of the Church against the civil power.<sup>214</sup> As EAPPI looks towards a political goal of ending the occupation, Ambrose provides a reminder that there are other more far-reaching Christian goals.

### **Augustine of Hippo**

In a 4<sup>th</sup> century Easter sermon Augustine flatters his audience while mocking Cleopas and companion. 'How do you think my heart rejoices when we seem to be superior to those who were walking along the road and to whom the Lord appeared? For we have believed what they did not believe', saying of the two disciples, 'A thief on the cross surpasses you. You have forgotten Him who taught you; he recognized Him with whom he was hanging on a cross'.<sup>215</sup> This is most likely a rhetorical device to grab the attention of listeners and make them realize that this mockery applies to them if they do not respond in faith. It is not so helpful to the interpretation of the passage as a model of accompaniment, where an attitude of respect towards companions is expected along the way. EAPPI is there to support defenders of human rights. Augustine's interpretation helps to raise the point that travelling with Jesus does not guarantee being in the right.

### **J. M. Arlandson**

---

<sup>213</sup> Ambrose, 'Isaac, or the Soul' in *St Ambrose: Seven Exegetical Works*, translated by Michael P. McHugh (Catholic University of America Press, Washington DC, 1972), pp. 60-61.

<sup>214</sup> *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, second edn. edited by F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), pp. 42-3.

<sup>215</sup> Saint Augustine, *Sermons on the Liturgical Seasons*, tr. by Sister Mary Sarah Muldowney RSM, in the series: *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*, (New York: Fathers of the Church Inc., 1959), pp. 223-27.

Arlandson (1997) also takes up the lack of insight of the Emmaus disciples, with the added twist of assuming that they are both men, their lack of insight contrasting with that of Mary and other women in the resurrection narrative.<sup>216</sup> This view that the narrative is favourable to women is challenged by Fiorenza who thus appears next, rather than in alphabetical sequence.

### **Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza**

Fiorenza (1993) notes, 'how much the androcentric interests of the New Testament authors determined their reception and depiction of early Christian life, history and tradition.'<sup>217</sup> Her feminist socio-political reading contrasts with Arlandson and others who have emphasized the role of the women and their testimony.<sup>218</sup>

'Luke does not know of any appearance of the risen Jesus to women. His androcentric redaction attempts in a subtle way to disqualify the women as resurrection witnesses. He emphasizes that the twelve who heard about the empty tomb from the women did not believe them but judged their words as gossip (24:11). When the men checked out the message of the women, it proved to be true (24:24), but this did not provoke a faith response from the male disciples.'<sup>219</sup>

Fiorenza attempts to peel back the layers to an earlier tradition. She claims that, 'the androcentric interpretation of the egalitarian primitive Christian traditions serves a patriarchal ecclesial praxis.'<sup>220</sup> Fiorenza challenges Lucan patriarchal presuppositions,

---

<sup>216</sup> James Malcolm Arlandson, *Women, Class and Society in Early Christianity: Models from Luke-Acts* (Peabody MA: Hendrickson Publishers), pp. 166-67.

<sup>217</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, 'You Are Not To Be Called Father,' in *The Bible and Liberation: Political and Social Hermeneutics*, revised edn. ed. by N. K. Gottwald and R. A. Horsley, (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books; and London: SPCK, 1993), p. 469.

<sup>218</sup> Cf. Robert J. Karris, 'Women and Discipleship in Luke,' reprinted in *A Feminist Companion to Luke* ed. by Amy-Jill Levine and Marianne Blickenstaff (London: Sheffield Academic Press; and New York: Continuum), pp. 23-43. This was the presidential address delivered at the fifty-sixth general meeting of the Catholic Biblical Association of America, 14 - 17 August, 1993, originally published in CBQ 56/1 (1994), pp. 1-20. Karris highlights 'theological irony' in Luke, 'by having the couple say that others from their group, who had gone to the tomb, found it just as the women had said but did not see Jesus.'

<sup>219</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "You Are Not To Be Called Father," in *The Bible and Liberation: Political and Social Hermeneutics*, ed. by Gottwald and Horsley, p. 469.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., p. 470.

supposing that there is an earlier tradition underlying it. This shows both a benefit and a pitfall of employing a hermeneutic of suspicion, in this case a suspicion of patriarchy. A benefit is to clarify where the biblical text is problematic. A pitfall is the risk of shaping the exegesis to a pre-determined result.

### **Karl Barth**

Barth approaches the “historical” in another way when he suggests that at Emmaus a veil is lifted and the hidden power of Jesus’ earthly life becomes apparent. It is a revelatory story concerning the identity of Jesus.

‘Clearly the meaning is that the full power of the earthly life of Jesus, hitherto veiled from their eyes, was now made manifest...The historical Jesus as such had removed the veil of the merely “historical” from their eyes and came to them as the Lord, the same yesterday and today. [...] The past of Jesus had become a present reality.’<sup>221</sup>

If EAPPI accompaniment is focused on monitoring the ‘merely historical’ with a view to consciousness raising and speaking truth to power, the revelatory dimension tends to be overlooked. Once Jesus is revealed the historical is changed because it is no longer ultimate but stands in relation to Jesus as Lord.

### **Kenneth E. Bailey**

Bailey (1980) is interested in the social and cultural setting of the story, providing a comment on Luke 24:28-9 suggesting that the risen Jesus had the social graces of a polite ‘Oriental’.<sup>222</sup>

“This time Jesus receives the unexpected invitation. As a courteous Oriental he “made as though he would go further.” The two men, again in true Middle Eastern fashion, “compel him” to stay. He is not forced against his will. Rather they know that he *must* refuse for the first fifteen minutes of discussion as a matter of honour. In order to

---

<sup>221</sup> Karl Barth, 'Easter Monday', *Church Dogmatics V: Index Volume with Aids for the Preacher*, ed. by G. W. Bromiley, T. F. Torrance. English translation (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1977), pp. 387-90.

<sup>222</sup> Luke 24:28-9, 'As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them.'

convince him that they really *do* want him to stay, and that they really *do* have food, they gently drag him into the house. They compel him to stay.'<sup>223</sup>

This cultural insight helps to address a problematic element of the story if it is to be treated as a paradigm of accompaniment. Jesus has to be pressed into accompanying the disciples, whereas accompaniers enter into their work voluntarily. Bailey explains it in the context of an honour/shame culture in which Jesus is protecting the honour of his potential hosts.

### **George R. Brunk III**

Brunk (1984) notes that the Emmaus story has chiastic elements. For example Jesus' appearance in Luke 24:15 is associated with non-recognition by the two disciples, whereas his disappearance in verse 31 is associated with recognition.<sup>224</sup> The whole story from verse 13 through to verse 35 is chiastic in format, beginning and ending in Jerusalem, with a turning point between verses 24 and 25.<sup>225</sup> At the centre-point of the story is the unbelief of Cleopas and companion in contrast to the witness of the women. The story turns on a theme of the foolishness of unbelief rather than a theology of accompaniment. This prompts the question of the role of belief in EAPPI if its message is a secular one, and its ecumenism includes a very broad diversity among its Ecumenical Accompaniers. Living independently in EAPPI houses, and no longer as closely linked to churches as the first EAs were, the role of belief in EAPPI service is not clearly defined, and some EAs feel that there is a lack of spiritual support. The main focus of accompaniment is not on the personal spiritual needs of accompaniers, but on the broader need of loving actions towards neighbours. Thinking of CR's tetrapolity, there may be an intra-personal aspect of accompaniment that is being neglected.

---

<sup>223</sup> Kenneth E. Bailey, *Poet & Peasant and Through Peasant Eyes: A Literary Cultural Approach to the Parables of Luke*, combined edn., (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), p. 108.

<sup>224</sup> George R. Brunk III, 'The Journey to Emmaus – And to Faith: An Illustration of Historical-Critical Method,' in *Essays on Biblical Interpretation: Anabaptist-Mennonite Perspectives*, ed. by W. Swartley, Text Reader Series Vol. 1, (Elkhart, IN: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 1984), pp. 203-22.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid., p. 214. Luke 24:24-5 'Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him. Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared!"'



### **Emil Brunner**

Brunner (1960) emphasises the otherness of the risen Christ.<sup>226</sup> Describing the Emmaus encounter, he compares it with the conversion experience of the apostle Paul noting how the apostles in Luke 24 became aware of the, 'mysterious companion who vanished from their sight as suddenly as he had drawn near to them.'<sup>227</sup> He observes that, 'such traits and others like them indicate the element of the "wholly other" in the mode of His existence and of His presence.'<sup>228</sup> Jesus Christ is far more than just an exemplary companion. His power to bring change is linked to his otherness. Accompaniers cannot stand in as Christ figures. That is a task for Christ himself. We are human beings and not God.

### **Clarice Martin**

Martin (1993) is interested in the ethnographic and world-historical significance of the Emmaus story, challenging the Eurocentrism of New Testament studies and seeking to show that the biblical horizons are inclusive and broad. Martin notes Luke 24:41 in a list of 'abundant expressions of joy in the Lucan writings.'<sup>229</sup> The Ethiopian 'going home rejoicing' is linked by a trajectory of joy to the Emmaus disciples who complete their journey not in Emmaus but in Jerusalem with Jesus.<sup>230</sup> It is the politics of omission that concerns Martin, because what is left out is sometimes as significant as what is included. In earlier years, including at the time of the fieldwork for this dissertation, EAPPI accompaniers were mainly

---

<sup>226</sup> Emil Brunner, *Dogmatics Vol. III*, first published by Zwingli-Verlag of Zürich and Stuttgart as *Die christliche Lehre von der Kirche, vom Glauben, und von der Vollendung*, "The Christian Doctrine of the Church, Faith, and the Consummation." (London: Lutterworth Press, 1962).

<sup>227</sup> Ibid., p. 410.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid., p. 410. Brunner adds the following references in a footnote: Acts 9:3ff. and Luke 24:13ff.

<sup>229</sup> Clarice Martin, 'A Chamberlain's Journey and the Challenge of Interpretation for Liberation,' in *The Bible and Liberation: Political and Social Hermeneutics*, ed. by Gottwald and Horsley, pp. 485-503.

<sup>230</sup> Luke 24:41 'While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?"' The list of references is Luke 1:44 (Elizabeth's child leaps for joy in the womb); 2:10 (the Angel's message to the shepherds - good news of great joy); 15:4-7 (joy at finding the lost sheep); 19:6 (Zacchaeus), 19:37 (disciples joy as Jesus reached the path down from the Mount of Olives); 24:41 (disciples encounter the risen Jesus); Acts 2:47 (the Lord added to their number); 8:8 (signs done by Philip); 11:18 (the Gentiles receive the Holy Spirit).

European in origin. The programme has attempted to address that by training companions from the global South, from Asia and South America. An issue for any global programme is whether it reflects global perspectives or whether one group dominates another.

### **Jerome Murphy O'Connor**

O'Connor (1998) gives an archaeological perspective on the Emmaus story. Visitors who look for an authoritative archaeological guide to Israel/Palestine often turn to his handbook, *The Holy Land*.<sup>231</sup> O'Connor offers four possibilities for locating the biblical Emmaus. Under his entry for the location called Latrun he says, 'Until 1967, when the inhabitants were deported and their homes leveled, the Arab village of Imwas preserved the biblical name Emmaus; today the site is called Aijalon Park.'<sup>232</sup> He notes also that in a letter written in CE 386 his namesake Jerome mentions this location, where he notes the change of name to Nicopolis, adding that this was, 'where the Lord made himself known to Cleopas in the breaking of bread, thus consecrating his house as a church (*Letter* 108)'.<sup>233</sup> Latrun would require Emmaus to be 160 stadia from Jerusalem (31 km), but although some variant biblical readings allow for this, O'Connor prefers the alternative of 60 stadia (11.5 km). This distance fits two other possible sites for Emmaus, Abu Ghosh and Qubeiba, but these, 'were identified with the New Testament Emmaus only during and after the Crusader period.'<sup>234</sup> O'Connor notes as a fourth possibility the Arab village named Qoloniya. This village was abandoned in 1948, and is located by a right-angle bend in the Jerusalem highway near Motza. O'Connor imposes no choice except in his comment that the reading of 60 stadia is probably original. The debate over the location of Emmaus opens up imaginative possibilities. It is both nowhere and everywhere, this place where disciples in companionship with Jesus turn their lives around.

---

<sup>231</sup> Jerome Murphy O'Connor, *The Holy Land: An Oxford Archaeological Guide from Earliest Times to 1700*, fourth edn., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980, 1998).

<sup>232</sup> Ibid., p. 319.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., p. 320.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid., p. 320.

### **R. S. Sugirtharajah**

Sugirtharajah in *The Bible and Empire* explores the subject of “Texts and Testament: the Hebrew scriptures in colonial context.”<sup>235</sup> He describes an, ‘uprising of an ecclesiastical kind’ in 1857. Sugirtharajah tells how Arumainayagam Suttampillai (1823-1919) mobilised the Hebrew scriptures, and used scriptural principles ignored by the missionaries to build a new church. This was a kind of ecclesiastical uprising in south India during a time when Europeans were dominant, missionaries were experienced as paternalistic and a violent uprising was taking place in north India. Suttampillai’s *Hindu Christian Church of the Lord Jesus Christ* took root in Tinnevely in south India. Appropriating the Hebrew scriptures Suttampillai was able to pursue an agenda that challenged the hermeneutical superiority of the missionaries and gave hope that his own people could honour their own cultural norms while breaking out of some of the restrictions of caste (one of the recognizable motives for the lower castes to adopt Christianity). Suttampillai was able to challenge the missionaries on their own terms speaking out against forms of idolatry and identifying immoralities of western culture, taking as one of his key precepts the relevance of the Hebrew Scriptures. This was in part to counter missionary views of Suttumpillai’s Indian culture as backward and immoral and lacking in intellectual rigour. Suttampillai justified this stance saying,

‘It is enjoined by God Incarnate that even the least commandment contained in the Hebrew Scriptures called “the Law” and “the Prophets” ought not to be overlooked, but to be strictly observed by His Holy Church (Matthew 5:17-19; Luke 24:44-8).’<sup>236</sup>

The Emmaus passage is used here to justify an anti-colonial approach based on the Hebrew Scriptures albeit interpreted in Suttampillai’s unique way. He shows the potential to use neglected scriptures to challenge scripturally derived narratives that have become oppressive, such as those that support colonialism.

---

<sup>235</sup> R. S. Sugirtharajah, *The Bible and Empire: Postcolonial Explorations*, (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), pp. 145-91.

<sup>236</sup> Suttampillai, *A Brief Sketch of the Hindu Christian Dogmas*, as referenced in Sugirtharajah, *The Bible and Empire*, p. 186.

Luke 24:44 highlights the relationship between the Emmaus passage and the Hebrew Bible.<sup>237</sup>

The strained relationship between Palestinian theology and the Hebrew scriptures due to the narrative of conquest and settlement needs to be addressed if the Emmaus narrative is to be seen as an appropriate paradigm of EAPPI accompaniment.

### **N. T. Wright**

Wright takes up the relationship of Luke 24 and the Hebrew Bible. In a chapter entitled 'Walking to Emmaus in a Postmodern World,' he interprets the story in the light of the third chapter of Genesis.<sup>238</sup> Wright suggests that Luke tells the story in such a way that it can be seen as a reversal of the Genesis story. He makes reference to Genesis 3:7, the eating of the forbidden fruit and its consequences.

'Luke wants to tell us that this story has now been reversed. I take it that the couple on the road were husband and wife, Cleopas and Mary (cf. John 19.25). The thorns and the thistles of their world have been puzzling enough, and they stand in sorrow and shame, with their hopes in tatters. Following Jesus' astonishing exposition of Scripture, they come into the house; Jesus takes the bread, blesses it and breaks it, 'and their eyes were opened, and they recognized him' (the Greek is very close to the Septuagint of Genesis 3.7). They thereby become part of the vanguard for God's project of restoring the world, in which his image-bearers take his forgiving love and wise ordering – that is, his Kingdom – to the whole of creation.'<sup>239</sup>

Wright interprets the meal at which the reversal takes place as eighth in a series of meals found in Luke, and therefore the one that marks the completion of the week of the first creation and the beginning of a new creation. He claims that Luke's 're-reading of the whole Old Testament story' implies that, 'The Temple, the place where God has promised to dwell with his people, is quietly but decisively being replaced by – Jesus himself. And the temple worship is replaced by the breaking of bread in Jesus' name.'

---

<sup>237</sup> Luke 24:44 *New Revised Standard Version*: "Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you – that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled."

<sup>238</sup> N. T. Wright, *The Challenge of Jesus*, (London: SPCK, 2000), pp. 114-33.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 125.

Commenting on a catalogue of errors and traumas belonging to the twentieth century, Wright compares our contemporary state to that of the bewildered disciples on the Emmaus road, 'Our dreams have gone sour, and we don't even know who "we" are any more. And now even the church has let us down, corrupting its spiritual message with talk of cosmic and political liberation.' He speaks of mission in a postmodern context as "re-living the Christian praxis," and,

'telling the story of God, Israel, Jesus and the world as the true metanarrative, the story of healing and self-giving love. We must get used to living as those who have truly died and risen with Christ, so that our true self, having been thoroughly deconstructed, can be put back together, not by the agendas that the world presses upon us, but by God's spirit.'<sup>240</sup>

Wright would have a return to telling the story. This is more problematic than he suggests. He claims that modernism has been deconstructed, and yet he seems to want to reconstruct it again by asserting that we must get used to, 'telling the story of God, Israel, Jesus and the world as the true metanarrative.' The insight that the Emmaus narrative is a reversal of the third chapter of Genesis could be applied in a different way than in Wright's account, as fulfilment rather than replacement. Wright sees talk of cosmic and political liberation as a betrayal of the spiritual message, which is unhelpful to EAPPI's political aim to end the occupation. Wright's choice to speak of his own Christian praxis as acting in truth and 'by God's Spirit,' is itself a political choice.<sup>241</sup>

### **Conclusions from the Biblical reflection**

The interpretation of Luke 24:13ff in terms of the practice of accompaniment is by no means the only, or even the main interpretation of this biblical passage. It is clear that the concerns of interpreters shape their interpretations, which is a reminder that EAPPI's reading of scripture is also shaped by its own distinctive concerns. Listening to other ways of reading a

---

<sup>240</sup> Ibid., p. 125.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid., p. 129.

key text brings the possibility of fresh insight that might have been suppressed were EAPPI to search only for passages that support its own preconceptions.

There are benefits for EAPPI from paying attention to alternative readings. In the selection that has been offered here, these include the priority of the quest for reconciliation with God, the promotion of belief and purity, the problems of patriarchy and colonialism, and the connections between different passages of Scripture that are in some way intertextual.

In an introduction to reading Jewish texts, Barry Holtz describes how a multiplicity of connections is given visual expression in an edition of the Hebrew Bible called *Mikra'ot Gedolot* in which the text is surrounded by the words of great commentators arranged in borders around the page, so that minds and personalities coalesce.<sup>242</sup> The great commentators do not always agree. It is by entering dialogue that minds are changed, and that includes paying attention to the ways in which others handle scriptural interpretation.

### **7.3 Theological reflection: Younan and Volf**

The description and analysis, particularly the account of EAPPI origins in the *Historical Background* chapter 4, supported an Achilles Heel critique: that EAPPI subordinates “theology,” by giving it a secondary role bolstering a pre-determined praxis. Examples of accompaniment praxis mentioned in the *Accompaniment Traditions* chapter suggest that EAPPI’s field strategies could function without theological input, but there are costs for a Christian programme that downplays the role of TR. If EAPPI falls in line with a secular praxis and management methods by giving uncritical support, “theology” has lost its edge, undermines its own position and reduces the impetus to seek further help from the Christian tradition and the insights of contemporary theologians.

---

<sup>242</sup> *Back to the Sources: Reading the Classic Jewish Texts*, ed. by Barry W. Holtz (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1984, 1992), p. 16.

Two theologians are consulted, one from Palestine/Israel, and the other from the United States, but originally from Croatia. The first is already familiar from earlier chapters: Munib Younan, a Palestinian Israeli citizen who is also Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land. He is one of the Heads of Jerusalem Churches who played a role in EAPPI's beginnings, and one who remains committed to EAPPI's on-going work. The other is Miroslav Volf, chosen because of his experience of the religious and ethnic conflicts in the Balkans and his reflections on reconciliation.

In addition to its academic purpose, and the hope of reaching a general reader with an interest in the relationship of theology and praxis, there is a specific audience in mind: EAPPI's Britain & Ireland Policy Group, of which I was a member for ten years. This ecumenical committee, which has Quaker leadership, comes under the umbrella of Quaker Peace and Social Witness. Their purpose is to encourage and guide the work of the professional team who recruit, train and support EAs from Britain and Ireland. By facilitating the staff team and the post of Programme Coordinator for Britain and Ireland, British Quakers act on behalf of the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland (CTBI) in their support of this regional section of EAPPI. They do this despite British Quakers not having taken up formal membership of the WCC. *Quaker Faith & Practice*, the book of Christian discipline of the British Quakers, explains the reason for this.<sup>243</sup>

There are plenty of theological sources available to EAPPI. The WCC has 348 member churches and a rich tradition of ecumenical theology, as noted in the *Historical Background* chapter.<sup>244</sup> It is not the intention here to suggest that theological reflection can be approached

---

<sup>243</sup> *Quaker Faith & Practice: The Book of Christian Discipline of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain*. Fifth edn., (London: The Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, 2005), § 9.08. This stance dates from 1940 due to the consideration that membership of the WCC requires acceptance of a creedal formulation.

<sup>244</sup> World Council of Churches, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/about-us> [accessed 1 March 2017].

in only one particular way. If theological reflection were more central to EAPPI praxis the variety of available perspectives on its work would grow and grow.

As noted in the *Fieldwork* chapter, EAs experience a variety of Christian traditions by attending church services mostly in Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nablus. The Jerusalem churches include Eastern and Oriental Orthodox, Melkite, Latin Catholic (Roman Catholic), Anglican and other Protestant denominations, each with their own theological emphasis.<sup>245</sup> The issue is not that EAPPI lacks theological resources, but rather the use made of these resources. A theology worthy of the name provides critical insight to shape praxis.

Munib Younan, in addition to his role as Lutheran Bishop, was elected President of the Lutheran World Federation in 2010 and is recognized for his world-wide work towards interreligious dialogue.<sup>246</sup>

Miroslav Volf's book *Exclusion and Embrace*, considered later in the chapter, is described in its subheading as a 'theological exploration of identity, otherness and reconciliation.'<sup>247</sup> Volf is consulted to see how he handles comparable themes to Younan, so that both can be examined for critical insights that have the potential to enhance EAPPI praxis.

---

<sup>245</sup> B. J. Bailey and A. Hilliard, *Living Stones Pilgrimage: with the Christians of the Holy Land*. (London: Cassell, 1999).

<sup>246</sup> World Council of Churches, 'Bishop Younan Awarded Niwano Peace Prize,' (Geneva: WCC Press Centre, 22 February 2017), <<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/bishop-younan-awarded-niwano-peace-prize>>, and Lutheran World Federation, 'An encouragement for peace-building,' (Jerusalem/Geneva: LWF, 21 February 2017), <<https://www.lutheranworld.org/news/encouragement-peace-building>>, [accessed 27 February 2017].

<sup>247</sup> M. Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: a Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation*. (Nashville, TN; Abingdon Press, 1996).



There are many alternative methods and definitions of theological reflection. It can be understood as a “critical friend,” or as entering into a ‘critical conversation’.<sup>248</sup> A definition by Killen and de Beer also notes the usefulness of the ‘wisdom of a religious heritage’:

‘Theological reflection is the discipline of exploring individual and corporate experience in conversation with the wisdom of a religious heritage. The conversation is a genuine dialogue that seeks to hear from our own beliefs, actions, and perspectives, as well as those of the tradition. It respects the integrity of both. Theological reflection therefore may confirm, challenge, clarify, and expand how we understand our own experience and how we understand the religious tradition. The outcome is new truth and meaning for living.’<sup>249</sup>

The intended outcome of ‘new truth and meaning for living’ fits with the Statement of Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church, the denomination that I represent as one of its ministers. This affirms that new statements of faith ‘in ever new obedience to the Living Christ.’<sup>250</sup> Despite Quaker suspicion of doctrinal statements, a similar point is made in the opening statement of ‘Advices and Queries’:

‘As Friends we commit ourselves to a way of worship which allows God to teach and transform us. We have found corporately that the Spirit, if rightly followed, will lead us into truth, unity and love: all our testimonies grow from this leading,’

and the next paragraph of Advices and Queries acknowledges ‘the guidance of the universal spirit of Christ, witnessed to in the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth.’<sup>251</sup>

Christology, the study of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, provides a basis for this chapter. A Trinitarian framing might have been emphasised, following a lead from Miroslav Volf, but

---

<sup>248</sup> Cf. J. Thompson, *SCM Studyguide to Theological Reflection* (London: SCM, 2008), p. 28. Definition 2: ‘A critical conversation which takes place between the Christian tradition, the student’s own faith presuppositions and a particular contemporary situation (Pattison 2000, p. 136).’

<sup>249</sup> P. O. Killen and J. de Beer, *The Art of Theological Reflection* (New York: Crossroad, 1994), viii.

<sup>250</sup> United Reformed Church, ‘Statement of the Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church (Version II, as approved by General Assembly, 1990)’, as in United Reformed Church, *Rejoice and Sing* [hymnbook], (Oxford: OUP, 1991), No. 761, pp. 1107-8.

<sup>251</sup> *Quaker Faith & Practice: The Book of Christian Discipline of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain*, §1.01.

Christology is preferred.<sup>252</sup> Consideration of the target audience for this reflection seems to require a focus on the life and ministry of Christ, rather than the doctrine of God, though the first need not exclude the latter.

Theological reflection is itself a form of accompaniment, as it involves coming alongside a particular praxis as a critical friend and encouraging a conversation that is open to life-changing and life-enhancing possibilities.

### **7.3.1 Munib Younan**

Lutheran Bishop Munib Younan is an Israeli citizen raised in Jerusalem as part of a displaced Palestinian family who took refuge there. The Lutheran Church of the Redeemer is a landmark building with an imposing bell tower, a short walk from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, a Christian holy place associated with the crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

#### **Colonialism/paternalism**

Younan gave an interview for this research which included discussion of Luke 24:13ff, the story of the disciples on the Emmaus Road, which he considered more appropriate than, for example, the story of the Good Samaritan as an analogy for accompaniment. He prefers a pattern of accompaniment in which the world church and the local church are equal partners, without overtones of colonialism.

Pressing Younan to say why the Emmaus story was important, Younan said that, “in speaking of the Samaritan you propose another paternalistic approach. These people who are coming from abroad are walking on an equal footing and facing risks. Both of us are in confusion, equal confusion. Because of the crucifixion and the resurrection we can walk together. The

---

<sup>252</sup> Miroslav Volf, 'The Trinity Is Our Social Program: The Doctrine of the Trinity and the Shape of Social Engagement', *Modern Theology*, 14.3 (1998), pp. 403-23. Consider also criticism of the social doctrine of the Trinity as in Kathryn Tanner, *Christ the Key* (Cambridge: CUP, 2010); also Mark Chapman (2001) 'The Social Doctrine of the Trinity: Some Problems,' *Anglican Theological Review* 83.2(2), pp. 239-254.

apostles [Cleopas and companion] escaped Jerusalem because they saw no hope for them. We are asking people to come to Jerusalem to see hope in Jerusalem, and justice so that [Emmaus] is the most suitable story in the Bible at the moment of accompaniment."

### **More than monitoring**

The term "accompaniment" Younan considered "more theological" than the alternative term of "monitoring" that had been considered. In his understanding monitoring involves somebody who monitors from outside whereas accompaniment has some political indications, but biblically it comes out of the experience of the local church. Taking the example of Luke 24 there are two disciples walking together; Jesus is accompanying them, and they are accompanying each other. They are living in confusion, dismay and distress, living with questions, but when they sit together at the table of accompaniment Christ shows himself through the breaking of the bread.

### **The Eucharist - peak of accompaniment**

Younan agreed that he regarded the Holy Communion as "the peak of our accompaniment." Asked how that view of the Eucharist fits with the participation in EAPPI of people of other faiths and of non-eucharistic churches like the Quakers, Younan said that they are welcome and "we do not impose on them." What they come and see is "the church initiating and owning accompaniment." What is important is that, "they are there, they are with us and they accompany for justice."

### **Similar programmes**

Concerning the accompaniment praxis of the Peace Brigades International, the Christian Peacemaker Teams, as well as the term "accompaniment" in the mission theology of the

Lutheran Church, Younan said, “we are inter-dependent [...] people who are suffering [...] who are trying to see the God of love and the people of love and justice.”

The concern to see the world church and the local church as partners in accompaniment is expressed in Younan’s ‘Theological Reflection and Testimony’ of 2005, in which he wrote:

‘[...] this accompaniment that God calls us to do as companions with the global Church is an accompaniment with groaning humanity that seeks forgiveness and the justice of God in order that all may be brokers of justice, instruments of peace, ministers of reconciliation, and defenders of human rights.’<sup>253</sup>

### **The global church**

Companionship with the global church is not an imposition of one onto another, but cooperation in the search for a just peace. Younan claimed that accompaniment is ‘valued for its own sake and well as for its results. It is open-ended with no foregone conclusions. The companions learn together through the journey of peace, justice and hope that God intends for humanity.’<sup>254</sup>

### **Justice and justification**

Younan is confident that God is on the side of ‘peace, justice and hope.’ It is perhaps an influence of his Lutheran background that he refers to the relationship between justice and justification. ‘Because we are justified by God and not by our own qualities and actions, we should all receive each other as God receives us.’<sup>255</sup> Justification points to human beings who are made in God’s image having value and therefore we build a community, ‘across the

---

<sup>253</sup> *Theological Reflection on Accompaniment*, p. 23.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid*, p. 24.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid*, p. 24-5.

barriers that exist between nations, ethnic groups, genders and generations and accompany the humanity that is suffering.'<sup>256</sup>

EAs do indeed build community across the barriers of nations because they themselves are drawn from different nations and cultures. They literally stand at the separation barriers and 'accompany the humanity that is suffering.'

Adding to Younan's observations it could be noted that there are barriers that are not crossed so readily by EAPPI. These include the barriers presented by theologies that do not fit with EAPPI's stance or Younan's.

### **The occupation as sin**

Younan selects a number of references from the Old and New Testaments that support his view of biblical justice, and follows them with the claim that the church's role is 'to be bold in accompanying the people who are victims of oppressive political structures or occupation.'<sup>257</sup> His selective use of scripture indicates one way to handle diversity, that of choosing texts that fit the narrative you wish to present.<sup>258</sup>

He professes the Palestinian Christian 'status confessionis' that 'occupation is a sin against God and against humanity', and that 'when we demand an end of the illegal occupation, we

---

<sup>256</sup> Ibid, p. 25.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid, p. 26.

<sup>258</sup> Munib Younan's examples include: John 1:46, Philip's call to Nathaniel, "Come and see." Acts 16:9, Paul's vision of the man of Macedonia pleading, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." Exodus 14, God who accompanied the Hebrews in cloud by day and fire by night. Luke 24:13-43, Jesus who accompanied two disciples on their walk to Emmaus giving encouragement and "accompaniment binds companions more closely to their Lord." Isaiah 1:17, seeking justice and correcting oppression. Isaiah 58:6, letting the oppressed go free and breaking every yoke. Micah 6:8, do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God. 1 Kings 21, accompaniment for justice by Elijah in the story of Naboth the Jezreelite. Luke 4:18, "The Spirit has sent me to let the oppressed go free." Matthew 23:23, religious leaders have given too much attention to ritual purity and neglected justice. 1 Corinthians 12:26, if one member suffers, all suffer; if one is honoured all rejoice.

demand liberation for both Israelis and Palestinians and create the necessary foundation for just peace.'

The claim that the occupation is a sin is repeated in the Palestinian *Kairos* document, which was launched at a WCC sponsored event in 2009 at the Lutheran Christmas Church in Bethlehem.<sup>259</sup> Professor Jamal Khader of Bethlehem University repeated it in London in July 2016 when delivering the annual Embrace the Middle East lecture, describing the occupation as a "sin against God" to be countered non-violently. Professor Khader underlined the daily humiliation suffered by Palestinians, "What I say is, we need justice, peace, and reconciliation in that order. Please do not tell me to forgive...when I suffer injustice. Let us work for justice then peace, reconciliation, and compassion will follow immediately."<sup>260</sup>

It is an open question whether this labeling of the occupation as sin advances the task of bringing it to an end. It does at least make it clear that the process of reconciliation needs to include of the forgiveness of sins. It will be seen later in the chapter that Miroslav Volf calls for the task of reconciliation to begin without delay, a tough call when the suffering continues.

### **The 'just peace' of Palestinian nationalism**

Younan is specific when it comes to describing the nature of a 'just peace.' He provides a detailed political manifesto including the 'ending of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land', 'a two-state solution', 'a shared Jerusalem' (detailing how West and East Jerusalem are to become capitals respectively of Israel and Palestine), the 'right of return' of Palestinian refugees, a 'political solution to the illegal Israeli settlements', 'sharing of water and other

---

<sup>259</sup> *A Moment of Truth: A Word of Faith, Hope and Love from the Heart of Palestinian Suffering*, ed. by Kairos Palestine (Bethlehem: Kairos Palestine, 2009).

<sup>260</sup> Church Times Staff Reporter, 'Occupation "a sin" says theologian,' (London: Church Times, 8 July 2016), <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2016/8-july/news/world/occupation-a-sin-says-theologian> [accessed 12 March 2017].

valuable resources'.<sup>261</sup> A 'just peace' apparently matches the hopes and aspirations of Palestinians. 'The Church and EAPPI accompany others who work for a just peace, for there are many Israelis who speak for justice.'<sup>262</sup> This is accompaniment with and among those who share the same political goals. It is a Palestinian theology of liberation. Younan calls upon Palestinians 'to continue the strategies of non-violence and the rule of law in order to activate our national rights in our democratic, viable state.'<sup>263</sup> As described here a 'just peace' fits the goals of Palestinian nationalism.

### **Other religions**

Concerning the relationship with Jews, Younan offers an element of confession of sins, but it is a call to mutual confession: 'We need to confess the sins of hate, non-truth and injustice that divide us.'<sup>264</sup> Shifting the meaning of 'confess,' he writes that 'the world should be courageous enough to confess that injustice has been done to the Palestinian people,' lest they become 'victims of the victims.'<sup>265</sup>

The emphasis of this "confession" is to support the pre-determined message of justice framed to fit the cause of Palestinians as victims of present injustice. That is the practical problem Younan seeks to address, the problem of the Palestinian experience of oppression. In terms of the thesis supported by this dissertation, theology loses its critical edge when it supports a particular viewpoint without that stance also coming under theological critique.

As for Muslims, in his 'Theological Reflection and Testimony,' Younan writes of the experience of living with Islam and makes an extravagant claim that the churches in Jerusalem 'continue

---

<sup>261</sup> *Theological Reflection on Accompaniment* pp. 27-8.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

to be the voice of Islam to the West and the Western voice to the Muslims and Arab World.'<sup>266</sup> As an illustration of this he refers to Jayyus, and the more modest claim that the local Church is a 'bridge builder' between Islam and Western Christianity. The bridge building is between 'people of justice and peace' i.e. Muslims and Christians uniting to forward similar goals. Jayyus is one of the locations where EAs have been active. Just peace and reconciliation, according to Younan, is about safeguarding the presence and witness of the dwindling Palestinian Christian community, accompanying 'sisters and brothers who are living in distress and under occupation'.<sup>267</sup> There is a danger here of over-estimating what the Palestinian Christians and EAPPI can achieve.

### **Palestinian genealogy**

Turning now to Younan's *Witnessing for Peace*, published soon after EAPPI began its work, the book is in three sections.<sup>268</sup> The first of these emphasises the Palestinian connection to the land, and Younan's own family history. The central part of the book sets out a theology of 'martyria' (or witness) and nonviolence, and the third part advocates what he calls 'Theological Trialogue'.

*Witnessing for Peace* offers a genealogical argument that the Palestinians, like the Jews, have an ancient connection with this land. They were Christian long before Europeans and Americans first heard the gospel, and on Younan's interpretation there are Palestinian roots in the Early Church, and even in the Canaanites and the Philistines who occupied the land before the arrival of the Israelites. He affirms the Jewish ministry of Jesus, and notes Jesus' openness to people of other backgrounds. Palestinian origins, according to Younan, predate

---

<sup>266</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>268</sup> M. Younan, *Witnessing for Peace: in Jerusalem and the World*, ed. by F Strickert (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 2003).



their adoption of the Arabic language from the seventh century onwards. They were the people of the region that was called Palestine.<sup>269</sup>

### ***Martyria and Nonviolence***

Younan gives the title '*Martyria and Nonviolence*' to the middle section of the book, and calls the first chapter of this central section 'A Theology of *Martyria*'. There he expounds the meaning of witness (*martyria*) in terms of word, deed and suffering.<sup>270</sup> He urges that the term 'martyr' should be re-appropriated from several usages that he finds unacceptable. As an example of an inappropriate usage Younan points to the controversial figure of Barach Goldstein, the settler who committed the Hebron massacre at the Tomb of the Patriarchs in 1994, later declared '*tsaddiq, "righteous"*'.<sup>271</sup> Younan prefers to define a martyr as a 'witness' who calls for justice and human dignity in nonviolent ways. He claims that 'witness' also needs to be rescued from 'Christian fundamentalists' who define evangelism as oral proclamation and the handing out of tracts, whereas it should be 'a witness to the whole person by the whole person.' 'Muslim fundamentalists' have also appropriated the term, in the Arabic '*ashada* (martyrdom)', but Younan would prefer to say that 'Witness is not just about death' [...] 'It is about living fully in such a way that death is the outcome.'<sup>272</sup> This is not just a theoretical discussion as he was writing at a time of considerable risk and there were examples of Christians known to Younan who gave their lives. Younan wished to hold back from endorsing the people of violence, but wished to support the Palestinian struggle in nonviolent ways.

---

<sup>269</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-5.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid., pp. 42.

<sup>271</sup> BBC News, 'On this day, 25 February, 1994: Jewish settler kills 30 at holy site.' (London: BBC, 2008) [http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/february/25/newsid\\_4167000/4167929.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/february/25/newsid_4167000/4167929.stm) [accessed 6 March, 2017].

<sup>272</sup> Munib Younan, *Witnessing for Peace*, pp. 42-3.

## Dialogue and Trialogue

In *Witnessing for Peace* Younan promotes 'Theological Trialogue', by which he means dialogue between the three monotheistic faiths of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, seeing it as a catalyst for reconciliation. He characterises the main issue between Israelis and Palestinians as being over land, rather than religious, though sometimes characterised in that way, and that unless the people are reconciled there will be no peaceful resolution. Dialogue between faiths is a part of the process towards reconciliation. Younan looks for the kind of 'trialogue' that 'transforms people for mutual recognition and acceptance of each other's human, national, civil, political, and religious rights,' made possible by a 'living, reconciling God who can make the seemingly impossible possible.'<sup>273</sup> He looks for this to be done in such a way that it will engage women, the laity and especially the young, and not just an elderly male clergy. A number of practical means to encourage this are suggested including the promotion of peace education in school curricula. Education about the faiths should represent them as they wish to see themselves, and exchanges should be encouraged to break down stereotypes at every level of society.<sup>274</sup> Younan urges an open and inclusive Christianity modelled on the inclusiveness of Christ towards others, such that Christ 'frees me to accept others who are different and to see Christ in the other and not only in myself.'<sup>275</sup>

Reflecting on the experiences of EAPPI encountered during the fieldwork, and during a decade of receiving reports of EAPPI activity, it has to be questioned whether EAPPI represents an inclusive Christianity, other than within itself. Its focus on collecting stories of human rights abuses means that EAPPI alienates those they monitor for those reasons.

---

<sup>273</sup> Ibid., pp. 124-5.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid., pp. 125-6.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid., p137.

A question for EAPPI praxis is whether it represents others as they are, or as the programme narrative sees them. It is a tough call to represent accurately those who are perceived to be part of the problem, particularly if encounters with them are limited to situations of conflict and 'fraternization' is not encouraged.

One of the fruits for Younan from dialogue with Jewish rabbis has been the recognition that Judaism has a two-thousand-year history of minority status under the Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians and were under the Romans when Christianity emerged. This can be instructive for Middle East Christians.<sup>276</sup> This is a way in which the Jewish scriptures can be meaningful for Palestinian Christians who can find the Old Testament difficult if it appears to be telling the story of their oppressors.

Younan refers to the new opportunities that came along with the establishment of ecumenical study centres such as Tantur (the Ecumenical Institute for Theological Studies that was the base for the research outlined in the *Fieldwork* chapter). He mentions a pre-occupation with questions such as anti-Semitism, the fulfilment of biblical prophecy and concerns about guilt over the Holocaust. Younan urges a different agenda concerned with reconciliation and co-existence, justice and reading the Bible together.

Younan's approach to witness and dialogue (or trialogue) is shaped throughout by a firm commitment to the Palestinian struggle with an emphasis on nonviolence and a just peace. This can be expected of a theology of liberation. But there are some unanswered questions in relation to EAPPI praxis that Younan has helped to shape.

In some ways EAPPI does not match the rhetoric of *Witnessing for Peace*. Inter-faith dialogue has not been a strong feature of EAPPI praxis, except perhaps in the Haifa Project, and even there it is not clear that both sides regard the experience as inter-faith dialogue. This is a British and Irish initiative set up with the help of Jewish contacts in the UK, enabling British

---

<sup>276</sup> Ibid., 145.

and Irish EAs to make contact with a synagogue community in Haifa. The EAPPI Programme Coordinator for Britain and Ireland has also helped to foster friendly contact with members of Jewish communities in the UK, as well as answering critics. EAs have also entered into conversation with people of other faiths at their presentations about EAPPI's work. It can be said that EAPPI is not averse to dialogue but has not so far made it a central plank of EAPPI praxis.

Anti-Semitism and concerns about the interpretation of biblical prophecy cannot be brushed aside, even if Younan wishes to focus on the urgent need for a just peace. In a true dialogue it is not for one side to decide the agenda and to exclude the legitimate concerns of the other. Biblical prophecy strongly motivates some Jewish settlers, as illustrated in chapter 6 on the *Uses of Scriptures*. It is important also for many Christians, such as Christian Zionists who would oppose Younan's concern to advance Palestinian nationhood. It cannot be ruled out so easily as a valid topic for dialogue.

Younan concluded his 'Theological Reflection and Testimony' with a call to be 'witnesses of truth in a world of propaganda and lies.'<sup>277</sup> But it may not be so easy for EAPPI to recognise when its own narrative has tipped over into propaganda shaped to fit the programme's agenda.

### **7.3.2 Miroslav Volf**

---

<sup>277</sup> CCIA, WCC Faith and Order and EAPPI, *Theological Reflection on Accompaniment : A Workshop Organised by the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs in Partnership with Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches, Geneva, 28-30 September, 2005* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2006), 35.

There follows a brief exploration of themes from Volf's exploration of identity, otherness and reconciliation, mostly as set out in *Exclusion and Embrace*. The themes are chosen because they are an alternative response to Younan's themes of liberation and dialogue/trialogue.<sup>278</sup>

### **Welcome one another**

The inner logic of Volf's book *Exclusion and Embrace* is set out in an introductory section called 'The Cross, the Self, and the Other'.<sup>279</sup> The verse from Romans 15:7, "Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you" encompasses the argument of his third and principle chapter, entitled 'Embrace'.<sup>280</sup> The themes at the heart of Volf's proposal are: '(1) the mutuality of self-giving love in the Trinity (the doctrine of God), (2) the outstretched arms of Christ on the cross for the "godless" (the doctrine of Christ), (3) the open arms of the "father" receiving the "prodigal" (the doctrine of salvation).' Volf summarises his use of the metaphor of embrace thus:

'the will to give ourselves to others and "welcome" them, to readjust our identities to make space for them, is prior to any judgment about others, except that of identifying them in their humanity.'<sup>281</sup>

This 'will to embrace' precedes judgment about good and evil, truth and justice.<sup>282</sup> This is a challenge to theologies of liberation if they put the demands of justice first and postpone reconciliation indefinitely.<sup>283</sup> The first duty according to Volf is to recognise our common humanity, the next to welcome one another.

---

<sup>278</sup> Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: a Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville TN: Abingdon Press, 1996).

<sup>279</sup> Ibid., pp. 13ff.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>281</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>283</sup> Naim Ateek, *Justice, and only Justice*, p. 150. Ateek includes reconciliation in his understanding of justice, saying, 'Unless we humans are extremely careful, we tend to talk about the justice of God

## Re-narrating the history of the cross

In 'The Trinity is our Social Program' Volf indicates that for him 'social knowledge based on the doctrine of the Trinity is above all to re-narrate the history of the cross.'<sup>284</sup> The cross he understood not as a simple repetition of heavenly love in the world, but as the Triune God's engagement with the world in order to transform the unjust, deceitful, and violent kingdoms of this world into the just, truthful, and peaceful "kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah" (Revelation 11:16). Younan indicated that the choice of story is crucial when narrating the theology of accompaniment, as in the example of preferring the Emmaus story of Luke 24:13ff to that of the Good Samaritan for fear of paternalism. Volf, on the other hand, focuses on the cross as effecting something important in terms of God's engagement with the world. It is in God that he finds the kingdom which it is ours to participate in. The doctrine of God is placed at the centre. It is not simply that Jesus was a good person who walked alongside others and helped them. He inaugurated the kingdom of God.

A major part of EAPPI's task is to monitor and report human rights abuses, using a combination of local presence and international support to bring change.<sup>285</sup> EAPPI needs to show that its motives are not antagonistic but intent on reaching out to victim and perpetrator alike, whoever they are, because they are human beings, and because of the example of Jesus Christ, but there is more to Jesus Christ than human beings can emulate. By virtue of who he is, Jesus Christ brings about a kingdom that we could not inaugurate without him and which helps to define what it means to be just, truthful and peaceable. The cross and the resurrection brought about something far larger than a particular kind of accompaniment

---

without keeping in mind that God's being is also righteousness, mercy, love and peace. All these are an indivisible whole in God's nature.'

<sup>284</sup> Miroslav Volf, 'The Trinity Is Our Social Program: The Doctrine of the Trinity and the Shape of Social Engagement', *Modern Theology*, 14.3 (1998), pp. 403-23.

<sup>285</sup> World Council of Churches, 'Results of EAPPI evaluation presented', (Geneva: WCC), <https://eappi.org/en/our-model> [accessed 11 March 2017].

praxis. In Younan's account, his pointing towards the Eucharist as the "pinnacle of accompaniment" tells a similar story.

### **The ambiguity of Liberation**

If Munib Younan is understood to promote a Palestinian theology of liberation, Miroslav Volf in *Exclusion and Embrace* notes some of the ambiguities of liberation.<sup>286</sup> For instance social projects that build on the notion of freedom focus on two opposites, "oppression" and "liberation". 'Oppression is the negativity, liberation is its negation, freedom the resulting positivity.'<sup>287</sup> Writing of the multi-ethnic context of the former Yugoslavia, Volf observes that this polarity fits all too well. It plays into a narrative of "victims" and "perpetrators". These are categories that are 'good for fighting, but not for negotiating or celebrating – at least not until the oppressors have been conquered and the prisoners set free.'<sup>288</sup> The victim is imprisoned within the narrative of victimhood even as it becomes harder to identify the blameless victim. When liberation is achieved it becomes difficult for the liberators to see that they too might need to change. The categories oppression/liberation are 'indispensible', but they are 'ill-suited to bring about reconciliation and sustain peace between people and people groups.'<sup>289</sup>

Volf's approach contrasts with Jamal Khader, referenced earlier in this chapter in the discussion of 'The occupation as sin', who has spoken of the daily humiliation suffered by Palestinians, "What I say is, we need justice, peace, and reconciliation in that order. Please do

---

<sup>286</sup> Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, pp. 101ff..

<sup>287</sup> Ibid., p. 102.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid., p. 103.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid., p. 104.

not tell me to forgive...when I suffer injustice. Let us work for justice then peace, reconciliation, and compassion will follow immediately."<sup>290</sup>

Volf puts welcome and reconciliation first, whereas some liberationists like Khader put justice first. EAPPI is not exempt from this tension. The dynamic of EAPPI accompaniment praxis is to build pressure for change by narrating human rights abuses to rouse international civil society to action. If the goal of overcoming injustice is to be placed within a larger narrative of reconciliation there is a need to consider carefully how to press for liberation and reconciliation at the same time, so that the demand for liberation is not mistaken for a general dislike or antagonism.

Volf refers to Gustavo Gutierrez, 'father of Latin American Liberation Theology' who is quoted as saying in the introduction to his *Theology of Liberation* that "the root of all servitude [...] is the breaking of friendship with God and with other human beings, and therefore cannot be eradicated except by the unmerited redemptive love of the Lord whom we receive by faith and in communion with one another."<sup>291</sup> Volf posits that, "To make love tower over freedom does not mean abandoning the *project* of liberation [...] the God of Jesus Christ is on the side of the downtrodden and poor [...] We need to insert the project of liberation into a larger framework of [...] "a theology of embrace".<sup>292</sup>

For EAPPI pursuing the twin priorities of reconciliation and liberation means ensuring a place for dialogue alongside actions to support those whose human rights are being denied. An approach similar to Volf's would contribute towards countering the argument that the monitoring of human rights abuses is at root anti-Jewish or anti-Semitic.

---

<sup>290</sup> Church Times Staff Reporter, 'Occupation "a sin" says theologian,' (London: Church Times, 8 July 2016), <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2016/8-july/news/world/occupation-a-sin-says-theologian> [accessed 12 March 2017].

<sup>291</sup> Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: a Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), p. 105.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid., p. 105.



EAPPI's current stance is that it works within a framework of 'principled impartiality' based on International Humanitarian Law (IHL) that implies a commitment to defend human rights regardless of who is the victim or perpetrator. The narrative that emerges tends to emphasise the actions of perpetrators on one side of the conflict. The record of sufferings is essential to the task of enabling reconciliation in the longer run, and this understanding of the task of monitoring deserves to be highlighted.

Volf recognizes with Lyotard that the right question is not how to achieve the final reconciliation but '*what resources we need to live in peace in the absence of the final reconciliation.*'<sup>293</sup> A responsible theology must facilitate '*non-final reconciliation in the midst of the struggle against oppression.*'<sup>294</sup> To wait for the end of all conflict would be to continue waiting endlessly, and justice postponed is justice denied.

Volf discerns that victims and perpetrators on all sides need to repent, and in the case of victims it is reactive behaviour shaped by the behaviour of oppressors that needs to be overcome. Enmity towards enmity is the pattern of Christ, 'the victim who refuses to be defined by the perpetrator, forgives and makes space in himself for the enemy. Hence precisely as a victim Christ is the true judge: by offering to embrace the offenders, he judges both the initial wrongdoing of the perpetrators and the reactive wrongdoing of many victims.'<sup>295</sup> The cross is recognised as the place where judgment and love combine without violence being reciprocated.

Mention should be made of an exchange between Miroslav Volf and Daniel M. Bell Jr. in connection with Volf's review of Bell's *Liberation Theology After the End of History: The Refusal*

---

<sup>293</sup> Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid., pp. 126-7.

to *Cease Suffering*.<sup>296</sup> In the exchange Volf's rejoinder to Bell identifies how Volf's thinking on justice had developed after writing *Exclusion and Embrace*. He maintains that,

'the classic notion of justice remains operative "with the advent of Christ" and is, precisely as such, set aside in the act of grace [...] in the context of transgression, grace (Bell's "justice beyond justice") is thinkable only against the backdrop of the affirmation *and* the setting aside of the claims of justice (Bell's "classic notion of justice") [...] To forgive is to name the sin as sin *and* to treat the sinner as if she had not committed it.'

In Volf's framing, justice is both affirmed and transcended in the act of grace enabled through Christ. He maintains that 'for systemic change you need commitment to justice and generosity, in addition to forgiveness.'<sup>297</sup>

### **The drama of embrace**

In *Exclusion and Embrace* the desired outcome is presented by Volf as the 'drama of embrace' which he outlines as a four-act play. Act one: the opening of the arms. Act two: waiting for the other. Act three: closing of the arms. Act four: opening of the arms again. Volf offers this explanation:

'The open arms that in the last act let the other go are the same arms that in the first act signal a desire for the other's presence, create space in oneself, open up the boundary of the self, and issue an invitation to the other to return. They are the same arms that in the second act wait for the other to reciprocate, and that in the third act encircle the other's body. The end of an embrace is, in a sense already a beginning of an embrace, even if that other embrace will take place only after both selves have gone about their own business for a while. Though embrace itself is not terminal, the movement of the self to the other and back has no end. This movement is circular; the actions and reactions of the self and the other condition each other and give the movement both meaning and energy [...].'<sup>298</sup>

---

<sup>296</sup> Miroslav Volf, 'Liberation Theology after the End of History: An Exchange', *Modern Theology*, 19.2 (2003) pp. 261-69. Daniel M. Bell, (2003). 'What Gift is Given? A Response to Volf.' *Modern Theology*, 19.2 (2003) pp. 271-80. Miroslav Volf, 'Against a Pretentious Church: A Rejoinder to Bell's Response', *Modern Theology*, 19.2 (2003) pp. 281-85.

<sup>297</sup> Miroslav Volf, 'Against a Pretentious Church: A Rejoinder to Bell's Response.' *Modern Theology*, 19.2 (2003), p. 284.

<sup>298</sup> Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, p. 145.

Volf indicates through this drama the dynamic of reconciliation and the overcoming of violence. Volf, like Younan, is committed to bringing peace without denying the demand for justice. Unlike some liberationists, Volf wishes to initiate the drama of reconciliation at the earliest stage.

### **Double vision**

Another theme from Volf's *Exclusion and Embrace* is that of 'double vision'. He urges that, 'Instead of seeing the self and the other or the two cultures and their common history from no perspective we should try to see them *from both* perspectives, both "from here" and "from there."<sup>299</sup> Volf continues,

'We examine what we consider to be the plain verities about others, willing to entertain the idea that these "verities" may be but so many ugly prejudices, bitter fruits of our imaginary fears or our sinister desires to dominate or exclude. We also observe our own images of ourselves, willing to detect layers of self-deceit that tell us exalted stories about ourselves and our history. To step outside means to distance ourselves for a moment from what is inside, ready for a surprise.'<sup>300</sup>

Meanwhile praxis demands action, and this is action that takes place without having sorted out all the opinions that crowd in. As Volf puts it, 'we must act before we have come to a "common understanding, which would allow both us and them undistortively to be."' This is similar to Volf's advice that, 'A responsible theology must facilitate *'non-final reconciliation in the midst of the struggle against oppression.'*<sup>301</sup>

Volf observes that 'when parties clash their "truths" will turn into "understandings-that-kill"; the more true they are held to be, the more deadly they will be. Without the will to embrace

---

<sup>299</sup> Ibid., p. 251.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid., p. 251-52.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

the other there will be no truth *between people*, and without truth between people there will be no peace.'<sup>302</sup>

## 7.4 Chapter conclusion

The chapter has aimed to do something similar to the *Mikra'ot Gedolot*, in which contrasting interpretations are placed side by side so that 'minds and personalities coalesce.'<sup>303</sup> This serves to underline the possibility that the broader Christian tradition and contemporary biblical insight can speak to a theology that is shaped by a particular context, such as a Palestinian liberation theology. Some of the same concerns emerge, such as the problems of patriarchy and colonialism. A feminist perspective emerges, and a caution against Eurocentrism. There is also encouragement to consider who Jesus is, and to place the accompaniment of Jesus in a larger context, that of mending the world, not limiting the scope of salvation in Christ to one context and praxis alone. Accompaniment is so much more than companionship in suffering and confusion.

The comparison of Younan and Volf brings the local contextual theology into dialogue with a perspective from the world church. There is much in Volf that reinforces Younan's message, such as the importance of reaching a better understanding of the other through dialogue, trialogue, or what Volf describes as "double vision." A difference is that Volf urges that welcome and reconciliation should not be postponed, despite the difficulty of considering reconciliation when suffering is on-going.

No claim is made that the chapter exhausts all possibilities either in the biblical or the theological reflection. The purpose is to show in a modest way that further theological reflection brings helpful insight and provides a method that could be extended as part of EAPPI praxis, not relying only on past theological work, but bringing the continuing task of

---

<sup>302</sup> Ibid., p. 258.

<sup>303</sup> *Back to the Sources: Reading the Classic Jewish Texts*, ed. Holtz, p. 16.

theological reflection to a place where it can exercise a critical function within EAPPI, helping to shape policy and practice.

## **7.5 Shaping the argument**

The first part of this chapter began with selections from the history of interpretation of Luke 24:13ff, a text that is considered relevant to Ecumenical Accompaniment. These examples demonstrate a variety of hermeneutical strategies and indicate that accompaniment is not necessarily the most obvious choice as an interpretative key.

Alternative interpretations are in danger of being overlooked when the passage is viewed through one lens only, that of EAPPI's accompaniment narrative. EAPPI's reading is shaped by its own preconceptions and could be helped by including other themes highlighted by the history of interpretation such as belief, purity, feminism, patriarchy, colonialism and the danger of Eurocentrism. Paying more attention to the ways others have handled scriptural interpretation enriches dialogue and interpretation.

In the second part of the chapter, introductory observations are made about the role of theological reflection as a "critical friend" in "critical conversation" with praxis. Study of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ helps to shape theological reflection on accompaniment.

Consideration is given to insights of Munib Younan and Miroslav Volf that are relevant to accompaniment. Younan noted the importance of equal partnership in accompaniment as a response to colonialism; accompaniment as more than monitoring; accompaniment as emerging from local church experience; and the importance of Jesus Christ's accompaniment through the Eucharist.

Within EAPPI, which has a complex structure with national coordination (e.g. in London) and international coordination (from Geneva), equal partnership could be code for Jerusalem

(Younan?) having a controlling influence. A separate study could be done on whether the experience of women within the EAPPI programme reflects equal partnership.

The Eucharist for Younan is the peak of accompaniment, though he acknowledges inter-dependence with the global church, with mission theology in the Lutheran Church, and with other groups (Christian or not) who accompany “groaning humanity”.

The dissertation parts company with Younan by questioning the wisdom of naming the Israeli occupation as sin. This is not to deny that the effects of the occupation are real, but a recognition that taking this step adds a further barrier to reconciliation, if that is an ultimate goal. Christians labelling the actions of Israelis as sinful without first repenting for Christian sins against the Jews, and without providing a means of atoning for this sin risks amplifying the conflict and is in danger of being read as anti-Semitic or anti-Jewish. A different way forward that does not involve accusing one another, is to build proleptic communities of trust seeking an honest dialogue.

Younan’s claim that the churches of Jerusalem are capable of acting as the voices of Islam to the West is an overestimation. On the other hand, Younan’s desire to step back from violence is worthy of respect. Younan urges dialogue (or triologue) but sets some limits. He distrusts the concern of centres such as Tantur Ecumenical Institute with issues such as anti-Semitism. This dissertation opts for the approach adopted at Tantur which pays attention to both sides in the conflict. Dialogue is preferable to misguided activism that fails to meet its own objectives.

Miroslav Volf’s argument can be summed up in the phrase “welcome one another, just as Christ has welcomed you”. Volf highlights the ambiguities of liberation theology, and the tendency to play into the narrative of “victims” and “perpetrators”. Such categories are ill-suited to bringing about reconciliation. In place of justice, peace and reconciliation in that order, Miroslav Volf puts reconciliation first.

Volf's approach can be contrasted with EAPPI's method of highlighting abuses as a means to bringing about change. A danger in EAPPI's method is that it becomes counter-productive because its labelling of Israelis as perpetrators tends to play into Jewish fears of underlying Christian hostility. Whatever truth may be contained in EAPPI's monitoring, it is heard differently because of Christian anti-Semitism, past and present. Volf wants to see "non-final reconciliation" and urges a kind of double vision that is able to see through the lenses of both sides in the conflict.

The chapter concludes with a vision of a theology that is shaped not by a single issue but fills out the meaning of accompaniment with a range of concerns that address feminism and patriarchy, colonialism and Eurocentrism, a list that is not exhaustive but capable of expanding to become more inclusive.

## CHAPTER 8. CONCLUSION

This chapter is in two main parts, firstly a chapter summary and then an attempt at a constructive theological account with suggestions for EAPPI theology and praxis now.

### 8.1 Chapter summary

The *Framework and Methods* chapter looked for philosophical tools to assist the analysis of data that would follow and found these in Critical Realism (CR). This provided justification for a worldview in which a theological narrative makes sense and in which the findings of science and social science can be upheld. CR also provides tools to help recognition of some complexities of human nature and social location. The chapter described how a CR framework encourages an open-ended approach in which difference is understood within a broader constellation. The research method for the fieldwork was then explained which enlisted semi-structured interviews of serving EAs and triangulated results against other sources of evidence such as the EAPPI archives and the researcher's own experience of EAPPI.

In the *Accompaniment traditions* chapter, EAPPI accompaniment was defined and compared with a number of precedents including previous work by the WCC in South America, and programmes that helped to shape the formation of EAPPI such as Peace Brigades International and Christian Peacemaker Teams. It was observed that it is not inevitable that accompaniment is a Christian praxis. A discussion paper from Sweden 'A is for Accompaniment' indicated a reframing of EAPPI accompaniment to take a nonpartisan third-party approach reducing the emphasis on interchurch solidarity. Other framings of accompaniment were noted including Lutheran Mission theology, Latino theology, and a narrative from within EAPPI that frames accompaniment in terms of eucharistic fellowship. The chapter urged that a framework that looks for its foundation in the life and ministry of



Jesus Christ is appropriate for EAPPI and that ultimately it should look to the goal of reconciliation.

The fourth chapter, *Historical Background*, told the story of EAPPI's beginnings with the help of a timeline based on documents in the archives held by Quaker Peace and Social Witness in London. It unpacked the key stages of a sixteen-month gestation period when EAPPI was emerging into being. The meeting at which the name change took place from "monitoring programme" to "accompaniment programme" (EMPPI to EAPPI) was examined for evidence of the vigorous debate that took place as EAPPI praxis was agreed. It appears that ecclesiastical solidarity was not the main issue, but instead the field strategies of Mahony and Eguran.

The significance of 1948 was considered, when the WCC emerged from its process of formation, the State of Israel came into being, and there was a massive refugee crisis affecting Palestinians. A timeline of historical events from 1948 to 2002 was provided. To describe conditions in Palestine and Israel, census details, a UN report and a B'tselem assessment of conditions in Area C of the West Bank were given together with other documents that helped to reveal something of the context in which EAPPI works. The chapter concluded that the Heads of Churches call for interchurch solidarity was met with a hybrid response based on 'principled impartiality'. EAPPI could be characterised as a secular project masquerading as a thoroughly Christian one, in which theology plays second fiddle.

In the *Fieldwork* chapter the main section consists of stories drawn from the semi-structured interviews. These came from the sample of 50% of the EAs serving in Hebron, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Tulkarm, Jayyus and Yanoun in autumn 2009. An aim of this was to see behind the programme rhetoric, which is usually vetted by programme staff. It is noted that EAs are

occasionally able to provide help for the downtrodden through normal unpretentious humanity and this does not rely on any theological programme. EAPPI does not seem to offer much direct support to local Christians.

The *Uses of Scriptures* chapter identifies a spectrum of narratives based on scriptures about Palestine and Israel. These were: a religious Zionist makes a scriptural case to 'resettle this Land'; a secular Zionist who works for peaceful co-existence; Left, Right, secular and religious - categories that oversimplify; Biblical scholarship tends to sidestep colonialism; an approach to New Testament ethics that confronts anti-Judaism and ethnic conflict; Christian self-deception in relation to Judaism, the holocaust and replacement theology; a Palestinian Christian view of scripture; the forms and influence of Christian Zionism; what possibilities are there to interpret the 'undisputed reference point' of the Qur'an?; and a secular critique of orientalism. EAPPI is one of many competing voices when it comes to scriptural reflection, and that it is on a par with the others if it simply reads its narrative into scripture. Another way of reading scripture is needed that is not derived from EAPPI's own narrative.

The *Theological reflection* chapter began with a biblical reflection on a key text for EAPPI accompaniment, Luke 24:14ff. Examples were given of interpretations of this passage that were not seeking to find analogies for accompaniment. EAPPI could learn from listening to alternative readings of its own favoured texts. Insights to be drawn using this method included the priority of the quest for reconciliation with God, the promotion of belief and purity, the problems of patriarchy, colonialism, Eurocentrism, and the encouragement to recognise the intertextuality of different passages of scripture. A Jewish method of allowing different kinds of commentary to sit alongside each other was considered helpful.

The *Theological reflection* chapter then moved on to compare a theologian linked to EAPPI, Munib Younan, and one who wrote on reconciliation having a background in the Balkan

conflicts following the breakup of the former Yugoslavia, Miroslav Volf. Similarities and differences were noted. Volf's message reinforced aspects of Younan's theology such as the importance of reaching a better understanding of the other through dialogue, or what Volf describes as "double vision." Volf has a particular emphasis on reconciliation that he maintains should not be postponed, despite the difficulty of considering reconciliation when suffering is on-going.

## **8.2 Theology and Praxis now**

The main purpose here is to set out some steps that can be taken towards a revised theology and praxis of ecumenical accompaniment. The WCC can only develop its theology and praxis in consensus mode with the involvement of interested parties, so this is provided as a prompt for those who can enable a change of direction. Some guiding lights are offered to bring to ground a new approach, as an alternative to previous EAPPI theology and praxis.

A broad definition of "Ecumenical" is adopted, implying a deeper engagement with perspectives on all sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in preference to liberation theology's "preferential option" which prejudges a desired political outcome on the basis of victimhood. Here it is considered inappropriate for a third-party intervention across borders to take sides, especially when the World Church has interests in dialogue with both sides. It is held that there are human rights to uphold on all sides of a conflict, and that there are theological grounds for accompanying both Palestinians and Israelis in that regard.

### **Ecumenical theology**

It must be admitted that there are structural inadequacies in ecumenical theology. On the one hand the WCC is a symbol of unity because it brings together many churches into one. On the

other it is a sign of division because those churches are not fully reconciled, and some key denominations are not members, including some partners in EAPPI. In such circumstances where consensus is arrived at in committee, theology does not flow from a consistent ecclesiology because there is none, nor is there a consistent view on Palestine/Israel across the denominations, or even within each one. The WCC has lacked some of the options open to the Vatican, which has recognized the State of Israel and made progress in dialogue since the promulgation of the conciliar document on inter-faith relations, *Nostra Aetate*.

### **The argument so far**

The next task is to consider what can be drawn from the argument so far. From the seventh chapter, Miroslav Volf's advice is taken to look for reconciliation without delay and to cultivate a "double vision" taking in perspectives from both sides. Munib Younan's theology is less satisfactory because his liberationist approach and Palestinian identity leads him to what could be characterised as a "sectarian ecumenism" under the guise of interfaith dialogue. As might be expected of a Palestinian Bishop, he seeks an ecumenical consensus to support and advance the cause of Palestinians. A less sectarian version of EAPPI would recognise that Palestinians and Israelis all belong to the household of God, and therefore both should be accompanied in the quest for justice without pre-determining who is an acceptable conversation partner. A broadly defined ecumenism is advocated here, upholding the rights and dignity of humanity as a whole, whether Jew or Gentile (cf. Galatians 3:28), Israeli or Palestinian.

The "facts on the ground" indicate that the UN recommended two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is steadily receding, as unilateral actions continue apace. In a list that is not exhaustive unilateral developments include the establishment of major Jewish settlements on Palestinian land, the extension of the separation barrier and other restrictors of free movement such as checkpoints, the US embassy removal to Jerusalem, removal of US financial

support for UNHCR and the passing by the Knesset of the Nation State Law. Such political signals indicate that the prospect of ending the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories is receding to vanishing point, and a just political outcome is delayed. In such a context of stalemate, it is argued that EAPPI should not tie itself to a particular political outcome such as “ending the occupation”, and instead defend universal human rights on the ground that all are equal in the sight of God. This would address many of the same issues as at present, but within a framework of being both pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli, rather than defending one side against the other. It should be recognised that Ecumenical Accompaniment in relation to Palestine/Israel is incomplete if it focusses exclusively on the West Bank and East Jerusalem, while overlooking Gaza and the many “Arab Israeli” citizens in Nazareth and northern Israel.

The New Testament recognises a Christian calling to a ministry of reconciliation (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:18ff). If reconciliation is accepted as an aim, EAPPI’s adversarial approach should be dropped because it plays into the narrative of conflict and carries with it the risk of denying the other’s truth, humanity and dignity. The gospels issue a call to love and pray for enemies (cf. Matthew 5:44), and that fits a conciliatory narrative much better than an adversarial one.

From the Fieldwork in chapter five comes the recognition that EAPPI’s Ecumenical Accompaniers have more experience of Palestinian perspectives while living among Palestinians, and less exposure to the perspectives of Israelis due to spending less time among them. In this regard Ecumenical Accompaniment is “one-sided”, though it must be admitted that ongoing conflict implies a constant imbalance and unfairness. This is not an argument about balance but about taking a stance for the dignity and equality of all humanity made in God’s image. Humanity’s membership of God’s household implies that common humanity should be emphasised and followed through into a consistent praxis that opposes violations of human rights on all sides. When Palestinians act violently towards Israelis that is as much of a concern as vice versa. Active nonviolence still implies an adversarial approach and when

activists become deeply committed to taking sides there is a danger of slipping into a general antipathy towards Israeli Jews.

The Historical Background in the fourth chapter reviewed evidence that EAPPI could have taken a different course as a monitoring programme, respecting the principle that ordinarily a third-party intervention across borders should not take sides in a conflict. The whole dissertation adopts a framework and methods encouraging a dynamic of freedom while envisioning the various conflicting perspectives as subsumed within a larger constellational totality and ultimately capable of being reconciled.

Beginning from the recognition of contradictory narratives that are represented within the EAPPI programme this research has sought to address a personal sense of cognitive dissonance and now seeks to alleviate it by finding an approach more consistent with dialogue. It is admitted that personal commitments of the researcher helped to bring about that initial feeling of dissonance, namely a lifelong commitment to Christian ecumenism and inter-faith dialogue, to opposing sectarianism and supporting reconciliation. This is a commitment linked to an understanding of the Triune God as the source and goal of unity and mutuality.

### **Divine accompaniment**

In the fourth century Athanasius of Alexandria in *De Incarnatione* answered the question why God became man: "Moved with compassion for our limitation, unable to endure that death should have the mastery, [...] he took to himself a body, a human body even as our own."<sup>304</sup> The divine motive of philanthropy combined with compassion is highlighted by Athanasius. In contrast, some accounts emphasise judgment and a peculiar form of justice in which God became man to secure punishment for sin, sometimes interpreted as penal substitution, in which Christ accepts unjust punishment as the whipping boy for the sins of others.

---

<sup>304</sup> Athanasius, *De Incarnatione*, chapter 2:8.

Theologians such as Kathryn Tanner have preferred a more positive account of atonement in which it is accompaniment by Christ that restores humanity to God in a model of atonement similar to the Orthodox *theosis*, that is by means of divinisation. On such an account, incarnation can be seen as revealing a God of compassion who acts in love to save humankind, rather than a vengeful and judgmental God. Without denying that truths may be contained in alternative models of atonement, in the context under consideration where there is violence and abuse of rights it is more helpful to emphasise the God of compassion rather than a vengeful God whose actions are an echo of unjust human conflict.

Christ's incarnation restores the rift and lifts humanity up to God. Human imitation of Christ is approximate because Christ's work transcends anything of which human beings are capable, by accomplishing the task of lifting humanity out of a state of separation and by restoring unity. Accompaniment is Christ-like when responding compassionately and indiscriminately to human need, even though Christ's work exceeds what humanity can do. Here "indiscriminate" means transcending race, religion or nationality, and thus avoiding stances that are pro- or anti- Palestinian or Israeli. The focus is on justice and equality of citizenship rather than nationalist aspirations on either side.

Ecumenical accompaniment is presented as a response to an invitation to "come to Macedonia and help us" but, when considered as non-partisan, the motive for responding to a particular call for help is love for humanity as a whole.

To love humanity is not the sole preserve of Christians motivated by the love of God.

Universal love of humanity, and a desire for humankind to be reconciled, is a story that humanitarians in general could count as supportive of their stance for human rights.

Ecumenical Accompaniment is incarnational as it is more than a response to a series of cries for help from Jerusalem Church Leaders, or a humanitarian initiative of a WCC committee.

“Incarnational” signals a relationship to Christ who accompanies humankind so as to be its saviour.

### **One household**

This study of Ecumenical Accompaniment adopts a broadly inclusive definition of “ecumenical”. God’s household (*oikumene*) encompasses all humanity. Every human being is born into that one household of God, and humanity is made in the image and likeness of God. The Judeo-Christian story recognises both the human dignity that this implies and the injustice that occurs when people(s) become alienated from one another and from God. Theological reflection helps to point humankind towards the unity that is in God as source and goal of all things.

The sovereign God who is from the beginning, the *arche*, or unifying principle of all, is the heart and focus of a story that can be imagined as a breathing out at creation, followed by the inward breath of God restoring all things to unity. The eschatological goal of unity in God is enacted now as proleptic performance drawing inspiration from the example of Jesus Christ, God with us. Through *diakonia* (or Christian service) the followers of Jesus seek to be reconciled already with God and one another, and with all people everywhere.

### **Repentance given priority**

Many disciplines such as theology, history, philosophy and law have been influenced by Christian values, and in turn these and other disciplines play a role in shaping Christian praxis and offering a critique of it. They are capable of assisting the Church in the necessary task of recognising its own failings and shortcomings.

Recalling the history of a Church that has stood in the way of the rights of women and of children and has often resisted campaigns for social justice and racial equality, it can be seen that the Church cannot necessarily be trusted to act in a way that contributes to the dynamic



of freedom. It has often exhibited division and exemplified violence that has harmed humanity, nature and the environment. That is why the Church and Christianity are reliant on critique from outside and inside to correct such deficiencies. This requires the Church to be “always reforming” and to exercise constant vigilance.

Although present generations cannot be held directly responsible for the past, Christians must confess that preaching and proclamation is undermined by evidence of abuse and violence by Christians and the Church. If Christians try to speak as if they have no history as perpetrators of wrongdoing their hypocrisy is soon exposed. Notable historical examples of Christian complicity with violence or abusive behaviour include the medieval Crusades that still affect relations with Islam; and the holocaust or Shoah that will continue to affect relations between Christians and Jews. Ecumenical Accompaniment does not begin with a clean slate.

The history of the Shoah reveals complicity of action and inaction by the German and other Churches, Christian nations and individuals, who could have done more to rescue Jews who were under threat of annihilation. Subsequent examples of genocide in which there has been Christian complicity, such as in Rwanda, indicate that there is still an ongoing problem needing to be guarded against. There are many examples of failed or inept mission involving Christian triumphalism, patriarchy, compromise with empire and colonialism, engagement in unjust violence, and complicity with apartheid and much more. Self-righteous Christian activism is counter-productive because these examples make it hypocritical, and risks being considered so even when speaking the truth. Honest recognition of past failings strengthens today’s accompaniment.

In Palestine/Israel, as in other parts of the world, theology after Auschwitz cannot speak from a privileged triumphalist position and lecture Jews in any circumstances. Although Palestinian victimhood is real, deep and prolonged, and should not be under-estimated, Palestinians cannot win their argument on grounds of suffering, because their experience is

not equivalent to the Shoah. Nor can the Shoah be ignored or denied without gross injustice. It is argued here that there should be a shift in EAPPI away from a Liberation Theology style “preferential option” for Palestinians towards an option for the dignity and rights of all peoples.

The identification of gaps and inconsistencies in Christian theology and praxis is an essential ongoing task. Christians do not speak with guaranteed authority, but neither do others. Through dialogue across the existing divides it is possible to reach a better understanding and an improved praxis. This can be described in Christian terms as seeking an “ever-new obedience to the living Christ” in the context of a world where progress is not inevitable, despite Christian eschatological hope. The vision of hope must be built in the present.

The secular human rights tradition, though sustained by a non-religious narrative, also upholds the dignity of humanity and calls for well-defined rights to be protected. This is expressed, for example, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. There is a symbiosis between such a tradition and Christian proclamation. Even though it is a secular expression, Churches played a role in bringing to birth that Universal Declaration. The Church needs the secular tradition of human rights, just as the support of the Church helped to bring about the Universal Declaration and now helps to sustain it.

Though it is tempting to pursue human rights through adversarial and conflictual means, conflict is unpredictable in its outcomes, and in an Israeli context can be taken as anti-Semitism. It is playing with language to suggest that Palestinians are Semites too, as they were not subject to the same real risk of annihilation under Nazism. The study recognises that EAPPI has not achieved with its adversarial method the objective of ending the occupation, and thus it is urged that EAPPI redirect its efforts away from such a political goal towards a conciliatory approach that is determined to work with and for all sides.

### **Accompaniment as service**

A Christian presence has enabled schools, universities, hospitals and other institutions to be established, so that Ecumenical Accompaniment is just one of a number of forms of service or *diakonia* in Palestine/Israel. Many of these institutions are far longer established than EAPPI, and more obviously making a difference to the peoples of the land. A hospital that treats patients according to need, and regardless of who they are, overcomes discrimination in practical ways. A study centre, school or university that brings together students from different sides of the conflict builds towards a future in which people understand one another and are capable of living together in peace.

EAPPI currently accompanies some people on their journeys to hospital (e.g. in Jerusalem) and works to ensure cohorts of Palestinian children gain access to schools and education (e.g. in Hebron). Extension of initiatives such as these is appropriate to the framework for accompaniment proposed here. Education for peace is incomplete if Israelis and Palestinians only encounter one another as the soldier at the checkpoint, or as the opponent across the fence. The skills necessary to facilitate encounters that heal barriers of misunderstanding are supported by a theology of dialogue and encounter, with an aim of reconciliation.

### **Pilgrimage as accompaniment**

In the Palestine/Israel context Christians account for a tiny proportion of the population, and secular and religious Jews and Muslims predominate. This means that Christian pilgrimage is a significant part of the Christian presence, and it is not only Palestinian Christians, the so-called “living stones” who shape the narrative about the land, for the pilgrim presence does so too.

The many pilgrims and Christian visitors to Palestine/Israel represent a far larger presence of the world Church than EAPPI can achieve through an accompaniment programme, or even the local churches through their witness and service. However vocal the indigenous Christianity, it is divided into many denominations (predominantly Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches, but also the Roman Catholic or Latin Church, Greek Catholic Melkites, and others including Anglicans and Lutherans), reducing its impact. Meanwhile Christian tourism continues on a large scale and carries theological implications that are not always comfortable to Palestinian Christians. The biblical story pilgrims and their guides trace and narrate is often that of exodus and conquest, naming of shrines and holy places by biblical names, tending to overwrite the Arabic history of the land, and consciously or unconsciously accepting something akin to the narrative of exodus and conquest. If Ecumenical Accompaniers help to promote awareness of the variety of narratives, not suggesting that there is just one way to tell the story of the land, but keeping people awake to the existence of different communities with different perspectives, that fits the story in which God is householder, and all belong to that one household.

The volume, diversity and fluidity of pilgrimage, and the many different groups who visit the same sites, implies the possibility of a theology that recognises the land as God's rather than the exclusive possession of some particular people at the expense of others.

### **Insights from the Status Quo**

The holy places are protected by a fragile Status Quo governing their custodianship. Respecting that Status Quo has theological as well as political implications. It involves noticing that others have enduring rights over their own holy places, and that implies recognition of their right to a different theology and praxis from one's own. Without this Status Quo the Christian position would be considerably weakened in the land of Jesus' birth, ministry, death and resurrection. The Status Quo is there to set boundaries in case of dispute,

but it also recognises that several peoples belong to the land and have rights, whether they be Jews, Christians or Muslims. In such places, co-existence is not an impossible dream, despite the unholy battles that have been known to take place, making the Status Quo necessary. The holy places demonstrate that living together is sometimes impossibly difficult, but also that it can be made to work. It suggests a reinterpretation of accompaniment as enabling people to live with difference. Even the conflicted history of places such as the Holy Sepulchre, which was implicated in the Crusades, can be used to encourage liturgies of repentance and reconciliation.

EAPPI could do more to recognise the pilgrimage aspect of its own praxis, especially as EAs serve in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Hebron, each with their own significant holy places. Even the tiny and remote Yanoun is linked to a biblical figure by its name and a shrine. If some groups are writing a narrow and exclusive theology of names and places to justify settler colonisation and exclusive rights, an alternative ecumenical theology celebrates the way in which people of different backgrounds can co-exist in places of pilgrimage and prayer.

### **Interpreting scriptures**

The task of upholding humanity's dignity, freedom and human rights, rooted in international law, is founded theologically on the birth-right everyone shares as citizens of the household of God. This is a biblical perspective, but scriptural interpretation cannot rest solely on what happened in biblical times, as there are many justice issues to which the Bible appears blind. Christians of New Testament times appear to have had little problem with slavery, and unequal status for women and men. Even so, scriptures can play a helpful role in opening debate and providing material for discussion if not allowed to close down argument only on the basis of what happened then.

The broader human rights tradition needs to play a role assisting Christians to interpret their scriptures aright. Important is the critique of passages that appear to support racist attitudes or anti-Semitism. 1 Samuel 15:2-3 shares an example of genocide against the opponents of Judaism, and John 8:31-59 appears to fail the test of anti-Semitism. These are dangerous texts if not handled as such. The hallmarks of suffering are there in some New Testament texts that read as anti-Jewish because of the experience of separation from Jews at an early point in Christian history. There are the shifts of meaning that took place when Gentiles started to read texts that originated among Jews. Jews criticising Jews has a very different flavour to Gentiles doing the same. The Bible alone is inadequate to arbitrate rival claims in relation to the “Holy Land”, so experience must also play a role. It is perhaps easiest to go for texts such as Romans 9-11 when entering dialogue with Jews, as the Pauline letters are more sympathetic than Matthew or John. Texts of terror should not be excluded from debate because the attitudes they represent need to be addressed. If ignored, they still emerge.

It is not for Christians to interpret what Jews will find anti-Jewish or anti-Semitic, but for Jews themselves. Likewise, it is for Palestinians to say where they find that some uses of scriptural texts deny their God-given humanity and dignity. Exploring scriptures together, whether from the Christian Bible, the Jewish Torah or Tanakh, or from the Qur’an provides avenues for dialogue.

It became clear from meeting the Ecumenical Accompaniers for the Fieldwork interviews that some craved more opportunity to reflect on scriptures in relation to their work and the same was true for some of the people they accompanied. Studying the history of interpretation of particular passages of scripture can loosen the grip of those who would insist that only their interpretation is valid.

## **Ways of accompaniment**

This reframing of “Ecumenical Accompaniment” is urgent because presently EAPPI is held hostage to political fortune and vulnerable to criticism for subordinating theology to a political goal that is both misunderstood as anti-Jewish, and also being overtaken by events. Possibilities of a two-State solution are fading as “facts on the ground” make a Palestinian state on 22% of historic Palestine impossible. The reality since Oslo has been pockets of population in a state of exclusion from mainstream Israeli society and Israeli “facts on the ground” becoming permanent. The core issue then becomes the reduced status of some “citizens” in relation to others, and the state of exception of refugees. The accompaniment of those who are excluded is a possible way of re-framing Ecumenical Accompaniment in these changing circumstances.

The refugee’s indeterminate status challenges ideas of citizenship and of belonging, their separation and isolation representing the opposite of universal accompaniment. Yet clearly the status of the refugee has a central place in the historical narratives and realities of both Palestinians and Israelis – with Israeli citizenship presented as a place of refuge for Jews, and Palestinians experiencing displacement that has resulted in many becoming refugees. There are refugees on both sides of the conflict, and a task of accompaniment of refugees on either side of the barriers of separation.

EAPPI praxis as described in this dissertation already offers some ways of accompanying Palestinians. In view of the framework being proposed, it is also necessary to ask what accompaniment can look like in an Israeli Jewish context. Yad Vashem, as a centre for holocaust memorial accords honour to the “righteous Gentiles” who saved Jews at their time of greatest peril. These were companions too, who enabled Jews to escape from Nazi

Germany, through provisions such as the *kindertransport*.<sup>305</sup> It is vital to acknowledge that Jewish and Israeli concerns about security and anti-Semitism are well founded.

In contemporary circumstances Gentiles accompanying Jews will entail speaking out against anti-Semitism, whether of the left or right in politics. It will mean enabling dialogue between different sides in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the building of connection between the two, and supporting education to provide elements of a curriculum that facilitates better understanding of each other. It will mean much more than that, as through dialogue fresh patterns of accompaniment emerge.

The inadequacy of national and international responses to refugee crises undermines the claim that human life is sacred, and the claim that their human rights are sacrosanct.<sup>306</sup> What the State of Israel, or the Palestinian Authority, or the United Nations cannot achieve may be possible in some way to groups and individuals working at a community level. The church is not a solution, but it can play a positive role. Ecumenical accompaniment of the refugee is both a theological imperative and a relevant political action because it resists exclusion while highlighting humanity's status in relation to God. The deep human crisis of the refugee, who is citizen of no-where, cuts to the heart of a conflict in which dispossessed Palestinians stand over and against a nation that understands itself to be the home for Jewish refugees from every nation, refugees from the Shoah and refugees from inhumanity today.

The New Testament letter to the Ephesians says of Jesus Christ, 'he is our peace [...] and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us.'<sup>307</sup> In Christian terms Jesus

---

<sup>305</sup> *Kindertransport* is German for "children's transport" a rescue effort for Jewish children organised in the months before the outbreak of the Second World War.

<sup>306</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, (Stanford University Press, Stanford CA, 1998), p. 133: 'every time refugees represent not individual cases but – as happens more and more often today – a mass phenomenon, [...] organisations and individual states prove themselves, despite their solemn invocations of the "sacred and inalienable" rights of man, absolutely incapable of resolving the problem and even of confronting it adequately.'

<sup>307</sup> Ephesians 2:14, *New Revised Standard Version*.



Christ, Immanuel God-with-us, is the universal accompanier who becomes the measure of Ecumenical Accompaniment. The accompaniment of Jesus Christ also promises a fuller reconciliation, overcoming the alienation between humanity and God. Human accompaniment, therefore, tries to overcome alienation between people.

### **Concluding observations**

Ecumenical Accompaniment can be founded theologically on the action of God in saving humankind through the accompaniment of Jesus Christ, Immanuel, God with us. It is through divine accompaniment that humankind is lifted up to God. Attending to the needs of the world involves the Christian in accompaniment as a response of thanksgiving to the compassion and love shown through Jesus Christ and his self-giving in ministry and on the cross.<sup>308</sup> This thanksgiving is expressed both in service to the world, and through the liturgy of the Eucharist in which Christ' sacrifice is remembered and set forth in word and deed. The cross itself is a sign of divine beneficence, compassion and love. In the same way human accompaniment in the pattern of Jesus, demonstrates not condemnation but love.

The ethics of humanitarian intervention needs consideration. Ecumenical Accompaniment with a broad definition of *oikumene* will go beyond boundaries and pay attention to the needs of the other who reads the world through a different lens. Jesus taught the Golden Rule, and similar ethical teaching is found in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, urging consideration for others. This, combined with the belief that Jesus died for all, gives Christians pause to consider how to act with compassion for opponents as well as friends. The history of Christian inhumanity towards others means there is an imperative to repent and to acknowledge that Christianity does not hold the moral high ground, is itself divided, and must work to prove itself trustworthy. Although it is the land of Jesus, Palestine/Israel is a difficult

---

<sup>308</sup> Cf. Kathryn Tanner, *Jesus, Humanity and the Trinity*, (Fortress Press, Minneapolis MN, 2001), p. 79: 'We glorify God in a pattern of action together that corresponds to God's decision to be with and for us in Christ. We are to be for one another as God the Father is for us through Christ in the power of the Spirit.'

context in which to make political sense of Christian principles, not least because others may suspect Christian motives as more to do with seeking to reassert influence than to do with “mending the world”.<sup>309</sup>

Significant aspects of EAPPI praxis already fit the broad ecumenism advocated in this dissertation. Care for the sick is evidenced in the accompaniment of hospital transport, hospitality to strangers is found in accompaniers living alongside communities and sharing in their life together, educational initiatives have included teaching English in the refugee camps, and peace-making endeavours include accompanying elected representatives so that they gain an enhanced understanding of what is happening in Palestine/Israel to inform their decision making. Such forms of service gain meaning from being directed towards God and patterned on the example of Jesus Christ.<sup>310</sup>

Commitment to accompaniment of Palestinians enduring the Israeli occupation should go alongside a full commitment to listening and responding to the experiences and concerns of Israelis. Repairing the relationship between Christians and Jews is a difficult task given the history of Jewish/Christian relations. Acknowledging the impact of the Shoah and the difficulty of theology after Auschwitz is essential. Building communities of trust is a long-term commitment and what Ecumenical Accompaniers can achieve in a three-month tour of duty is limited. The principle of accompanying both sides is encapsulated in the phrase, “not without my neighbour.”<sup>311</sup> The New Testament parable of the Good Samaritan encourages a way of

---

<sup>309</sup> These considerations are influenced by Jean-Luc Blondel’s account in Semegnish Asfaw, Guillermo Kerber and Peter Weiderud (eds.) *The Responsibility to Protect: Ethical and Theological Reflections*, (World Council of Churches, Geneva, 2005), p. 57.

<sup>310</sup> Cf. Luke Bretherton, *Hospitality as Holiness*, p. 151: ‘the only criterion by which the church can accept or reject the thought and action of its neighbours is whether such action accords with thought and action directed to God.’

<sup>311</sup> Cf. S. Wesley Ariarajah, *Not Without My Neighbour*, (WCC Publications, Geneva, 1999), p. 81, in which he observes that, ‘we cannot insist that a community’s teachings, ethical and moral conduct or structures should be acceptable to us in order to enter into dialogue.’

thought and action that finds neighbourliness to be exemplified in the crossing of boundaries.<sup>312</sup>

Informed dialogue with other major religions is mostly lacking from EAPPI praxis.<sup>313</sup> In general EAPPI has not paid enough attention to this, apart from some accompaniers taking part in the Haifa Project, and the inclusion of some Jewish or Muslim contributors to the training of Ecumenical Accompaniers. In Palestine/Israel many of the people with whom Ecumenical Accompaniers engage are religious believers, mostly Muslim. Genuine encounter is restricted if confined to that which modern athiests, agnostics or secularists can accept. EAPPI tends to work within these confines.

If EAPPI were more open to informed dialogue with people of faith on all sides of the conflict, rather than engaging in a secular conversation as if this were the only common ground, there could be dialogue about religiously informed ethics. Mohondas Gandhi, when seeking to bring change in India at the time of the Raj made appeal to the Christian ethical tradition of his opposite numbers. Jews, Christians and Muslims have shown themselves capable of finding common ethical values, such as the understanding that God is compassionate, and humanity should reflect this.

This chapter upholds a cosmic view of God's household and attention to the dignity of human beings made in the image and likeness of God. Jesus Christ is identified here as universal accompanier and an account of soteriology is preferred in which it is through God's gift of himself in Jesus that we are lifted up to God. Concern for neighbour, hospitality and inter-faith dialogue were explored as expressions of accompaniment of which Jesus Christ can be the measure. It has been suggested that a narrow focus on a secular Human Rights tradition

---

<sup>312</sup> See Luke 10:25-37.

<sup>313</sup> Cf. Charles Mathewes, *A Theology of Public Life*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 116, for a defence of such interfaith engagement.

overlooks the possibility that common ethical insights, such as compassion, are there to be discovered through inter-faith dialogue.<sup>314</sup>

Seen in Christian perspective, accompaniment that is ecumenical in the sense of universal, is at the heart of who we are in creation (made in God's image), and in the story of salvation (Immanuel God-with us), and in the ultimate and proleptic eschatological hope (reconciled one with another). Ecumenical Accompaniment is more than just a re-iteration of a secular human rights tradition. It is an expression of compassion that activates God's image in us. It can be understood as the normal or default position of what it means to be a Christian.

---

<sup>314</sup> Cf. Oliver Davies, *A Theology of Compassion*, (Eerdmans, Cambridge, 2001), p. 252: "To speak of God as compassion is to accept his injunction that we ourselves should be compassionate, and it is to understand that undergoing the dispossession-of-self entailed in compassion is to align our own 'being' with God's 'being', and thus, performatively, to participate in the ecstatic ground of the Holy Trinity. It is to activate God's image in us."

## APPENDIX 1. Topic guide/Interview questions:

semi-structured interview of Ecumenical Accompaniers

1. Are there any questions you have before we start?
2. Gender
3. Age
4. Ethnicity
5. Highest educational qualification
6. Occupation/job
7. Placement location name
8. Sending country
9. First language (mother tongue)
10. Have you served as an Ecumenical Accompanier (EA) before?
11. Do you speak any Arabic or Hebrew?
12. How do you communicate with local people?
13. What led you to serve as an EA?
14. Has the reality matched your expectations?
15. Could you describe a typical day for an accompanier in this team?
16. What did you and the team do yesterday?
17. What does accompaniment mean to you?
18. Please would you draw me a rough map to show where you go and what you do as an EA?
19. How do you and your team decide on the priorities for your work here?
20. What in your experience as an EA stands out as significant?
21. You are an *ecumenical* accompanier. What does the word 'ecumenical' mean to you?
22. What role, if any, does prayer, worship or other spiritual discipline have for you as an EA?
23. Can you think of a Bible passage, or other spiritual writing that inspires your EA work?  
If so, please tell me what it means to you.
24. EAs follow principles of nonviolence. What is your understanding of nonviolence?
25. There are representatives of Judaism, Christianity and Islam in the Holy Land. Please would you describe a conversation or encounter you have had with someone from each of these faiths. *[This question is intended to show whether the EAPPI participant has had a range of encounters with people of other faiths, and to explore the nature of those encounters e.g. if they have been among Palestinians some of whom are devout Muslims, have they also met Israelis, some of whom practice their faith? It may also give the interviewee an opportunity to speak about inter-faith issues in relation to their own beliefs].*
26. What thoughts come into your mind when you hear the Muslim Call to Prayer?
27. Have you visited Yad Vashem holocaust museum? If so, how did you react? If not, how do you expect to react?
28. Have you learnt anything about the witness of local Christians in the Holy Land?
29. What have you learnt about the role of religion in the conflict here?
30. What is the most important message you want to take to people back home from your experience as an EA?

## APPENDIX 2: City of Dreams

7.01.10

By: Lovisa, EA in Hebron



**Hebron is a large Palestinian city in the south of the West Bank. At the heart of the city lies the Israeli settlement of Tel Rumeida. Constantly patrolled by Israeli soldiers and armed gangs of settlers, Hebron is a tense and often dangerous place. This is one side of Hebron. But it is also a city full of dreams.**

**Sahar Tarawah is 20 years old and studies Project Management at Hebron University. This is her dream:**

"I have a dream that Israelis and Palestinians would be friends. I believe that a two state solution is logical and I want to be able to travel freely, even in to Israel. Jerusalem is just an hour away from Hebron, but I haven't been there in nine years. It hurts every single time I think about the fact that I don't have permission to go there. I hope that I soon will be able to travel abroad and I would love to visit Turkey or Italy. Another dream I have is the one I think of every time I leave my house. The entrance to my village has been blocked for nine years and the big cement blocks hinder us from driving with our cars to our homes. On several occasions we have taken away the blocks, but after two days they are there again. My dream is that they will be permanently removed and that we can move freely without hindrances. I will never get used to them".



**Islam Fackori is 21 years old and sells Palestinian souvenirs on the streets of Hebron. This is his dream:**

"I want peace. We need peace. My dream is that Israelis and Palestinians can live together in Hebron without a problem. I want the big market that was closed during the second intifada (Palestinian uprising) to open again. My father had two shops in that market and just like hundreds of others he had to close them. Yet I can still remember that Israelis came in to the shop and bought goods from my father. I want it to be like that again and one day I want to reopen those two shops. My dream is written here on my shirt: Peace will come - why not now?"



**Manar Alnatsha is 26 years old and works as a liaison officer for the United Nations Office for Projects Services. This is her dream:**

"I was born under occupation. I live under occupation. I believe that the way to peace goes through politics and we will not live normally with justice without political agreements. My dream is to live in my homeland, Palestine. I don't want to move abroad now because I can then lose my right to return. My dream is a unified Palestine on all the 1948 land. I believe in a one state solution where Palestinians and Israelis have the same rights and equal citizenship. The two state solution was a good option but the settlements have expanded too much now and made it impossible. People talk about an independent Palestinian state, but there are so many different definitions. That is a major problem.

For me a Palestinian state includes the right of return for over four million Palestinian refugees in the Diaspora. There is no sense in trying to create a Palestinian state if that right is not a given. In this conflict we tend to forget about the millions of refugees that live inside and outside

Palestine. It is not too much to ask for the same rights for all citizens. I might be naive, but if we look at South Africa we can see that it was a positive development there and my dream is that the same can happen here.”



**Reem Al-Shareef is 39 years old and principal at the Cordoba school in Hebron. This is her dream:**

“I want Israelis and Palestinians to be neighbors again - and act like neighbors. I want a better atmosphere for everyone who lives here. Hebron is not just for Muslims. Christians, Jews and Muslims used to live here together and I have experienced how we used to buy food in the same shops and my grandmother used to share recipes with her Jewish neighbors. There are many who claim that the conflict is religious, but it is not about religion. It’s about politics. I wish that both sides would be treated fairly - that is not the

case today. It is most important here at the Cordoba school that the children feel safe and my goal is that the school will grow and develop. I hope that as many children as possible will continue with their studies. My dream is that the situation in Hebron will become normal.”



**Ameer Qaisi is 19 years old and studies Computer Science at the Hebron University. This is his dream:**

“My dream is to create technical solutions that make people’s life easier. Daily life for Palestinians is hard enough and we want to live just like people in the rest of the world: in peace. Peace that allows us to use our rights. My dream is that all Palestinian refugees can return and I want to visit my friend in Gaza. For a long time I did not know if he was dead or alive. Today we have contact via Internet but we cannot meet. The settlements make life hard here in Hebron, but there are many things I like about the city and I

want to live here in the future. I like the open atmosphere here and the way people connect - Hebronites are friendly and talk with each other on the street. My dream is to be able to develop my ideas, but today it’s hard because there is lack of both resources and good equipment here in Palestine. It’s important to have dreams, although it’s hard for many to allow themselves to have them since we have seen so many dreams vanish into thin air.”



**Eid Suleman is 24 years old, unemployed and lives in the village Umm Al-Kheir in South Hebron Hills. This is his dream:**

“My dream is that Palestinians can move freely and my dream is simple. I want a simple life. I want to be able to live as a sheep herder without being afraid. We are tired of the occupation and need a rest from it. I have a demolition order on my house and there are several other tents and houses in our village that have the same orders. I am fighting hard to win the battle so that the demolitions not will take place. I hope - I really hope - that the houses and tents will remain because if they are demolished it will be a catastrophe here in the village. We don’t have construction permits and besides we cannot afford to build anything new. I dare to hope because we

get so much support from internationals and until the very last minute I will dream because I don’t have a choice - I must believe in a better future.”

□

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Agamben, Giorgio, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, (Stanford University Press, Stanford CA, 1998)

Åkerlund, A., E. Villanueva and K. Berg, 'A as in Accompaniment,' trans. By Kristina Lundqvist (Stockholm: Swedish EAPPI or SEAPPI, 2002)

Ambrose, Saint, "Isaac, or the Soul" in *St Ambrose: Seven Exegetical Works*, trans. by Michael P. McHugh, (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1972)

Ariarajah, S. Wesley, *Not Without My Neighbour*, (WCC Publications, Geneva, 1999)

Asfaw, Semegnish, Guillermo Kerber and Peter Weiderud (eds.) *The Responsibility to Protect: Ethical and Theological Reflections*, (World Council of Churches, Geneva, 2005)

Athanasius, *De Incarnatione*

*A Moment of Truth: A Word of Faith, Hope and Love from the Heart of Palestinian Suffering*. (Bethlehem, Kairos Palestine, 2009)

Arlandson, James Malcolm, *Women, Class and Society in Early Christianity: Models from Luke-Acts* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997)

Archer, Margaret S., Andrew Collier and Douglas V. Porpora, *Transcendence: Critical realism and God* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004)

Ateek, N., *Justice, and only Justice: a Palestinian theology of liberation*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990)

Augustine, Saint, *Sermons on the Liturgical Seasons*, trans. by Sister Mary Sarah Muldowney, RSM, in the series *The Fathers of the Church: a new translation*, (New York: Fathers of the Church Inc., 1959)

Erich Auerbach, (1953, 2003) *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, (Woodstock, NY: Princeton University Press, 1953, 2003), fifteenth Anniversary edition with a new introduction by Edward W. Said.

*Back to the Sources: Reading the Classic Jewish Texts*, ed. by Barry W. Holtz (New York, Simon & Schuster, 1984, 1992)

Bailey, B. J. and A. Hilliard, *Living Stones Pilgrimage: with the Christians of the Holy Land*. (London: Cassell, 1999)

Bailey, Kenneth E., (1980), *Poet & Peasant and Through Peasant Eyes: A Literary Cultural Approach to the Parables of Luke*, combined edition (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1980)

Barton, John, *The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)

Barth, Karl, 'Easter Monday', *Church Dogmatics V: Index Volume with Aids for the Preacher*, ed. by G. W. Bromiley, T. F. Torrance. English translation (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1977)

Baskin, Gershon, 'Encountering Peace: Defining Who We Are', *The Jerusalem Post*, 26 November 2014

Baskin, Gershon, *The Negotiator: Freeing Gilad Shalit from Hamas* (Milford, CT: The Toby Press, 2013)

Bell, D. M., 'What Gift is Given? A Response to Volf', *Modern Theology* 19:2 (2003), 271-280



Bergen, Kathy, 'A Report of the Consultation organized by the World Council of Churches, Geneva, Switzerland, February 1 & 2, 2002', (p. 2). EAPPI archives held at Friends House, Euston, London.

Bhaskar, R., *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom*, (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2008)

Bhaskar, R., *From Science to Emancipation: Alienation and the Actuality of Enlightenment*, (New Delhi; Thousand Oaks CA: Sage, London, 2002).

*The Bible and Liberation: Political and Social Hermeneutics*, revised edn., ed. by N. K. Gottwald and R. A. Horsley (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books; and London, SPCK, 1993).

Bonhoeffer, D., *Letters and papers from prison*, ed. by J. Bowden (London: SCM, 2001)

Bourdieu, P., *Outline of a theory of practice*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977)

Bretherton, Luke, *Hospitality as Holiness: Christian Witness Amid Moral Diversity*, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2006)

Britain Yearly Meeting, *Quaker Faith & Practice: The Book of Christian Discipline of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain*, fifth edition (London: The Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, 2005)

Brunk III, George R., 'The Journey to Emmaus – And to Faith: An Illustration of Historical-Critical Method', in *Essays on Biblical Interpretation: Anabaptist-Mennonite Perspectives*, ed. by W. Swartley, Text Reader Series Vol. 1, (Elkhart, IN; Institute of Mennonite Studies, 1984), pp. 203-222

Brunner, Emil, *Dogmatics*, Vol. III, first published by Zwingli-Verlag of Zürich and Stuttgart as *Die christliche Lehre von der Kirche, vom Glauben, und von der Vollendung*, "The Christian Doctrine of the Church, Faith, and the Consummation." (London: Lutterworth Press, 1962)

Canaan, Tewfik, *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries in Palestine*, limited edn. (Jerusalem, Ariel Publishing House, 1980)

Chapman, M. D., 'The Social Doctrine of the Trinity: Some Problems,' *Anglican Theological Review* 83:2.2 (2001), 239-254

Davies, Oliver, *A Theology of Compassion*, (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2001)

Dean, P. B., "'Only by being reconciled among themselves can Christians play their full part in making Jerusalem the City of Peace for all peoples.'" (John Paul II). A critical evaluation of Christian theological attitudes to the Holy Land and a proposal for possibilities for encounter, discussion and dialogue between two contrasting Jerusalem study tour groups,' (unpublished master's thesis, University of Oxford, 2005)

*Dictionary of Critical Realism*, ed. by M. Hartwig (London: Routledge, 2007)

*EAPPI Identity Manual* (Geneva: WCC, 2014)

Esack, Farid, *On Being a Muslim: Finding a Religious Path in the World Today* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1999)

Eskidjian, Salpy, 'Report on the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) and Main Recommendations for Consideration and Action, November 2002.' (Geneva, WCC International Relations Programme Executive, 2002)

Fiorenza, Elisabeth Schüssler, 'You Are Not To Be Called Father,' in *The Bible and Liberation: Political and Social Hermeneutics*, revised edn., ed. by N. K. Gottwald and R. A. Horsley (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books; and London: SPCK, 1993).

- Gales of Change: responding to a shifting missionary context*, ed. by B. Thorogood (Geneva, WCC Publications, 1994)
- Gallagher, N. E., *Quakers in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: the dilemmas of NGO humanitarian activism* (Cairo; New York, American University in Cairo Press, 2007)
- Gandhi, M., *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, ed. by J. Parel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)
- Geertz, C., *The Interpretation of Cultures: selected essays*. (New York, NY: Basic Books, Perseus Books Group, 1973)
- Goizueta, Roberto S., *Caminemos Con Jesús: toward a Hispanic/Latino Theology of Accompaniment*, (Maryknoll, NY, Orbis Books, 1995)
- Goodall, N., *Second Fiddle: Recollections and Reflections* (London: SPCK, 1979)
- Harper, Charles R., *O Acompanhamento*, (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2006)
- Hays, Richard B., *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation; A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* (London, HarperCollins, 1997)
- Holy Bible, *The Jewish Study Bible* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1985, 1999)
- Holy Bible, *New Revised Standard Version: Containing the Old and New Testaments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)
- Just Peace Companion* (WCC, Geneva, 2011)
- Kelsey, David H., *The Uses of Scripture in Recent Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1975).
- Kern, K., *In Harm's Way: A History of Christian Peacemaker Teams* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009)
- Killen, P. O. and J. de Beer, *The Art of Theological Reflection*. (New York: Crossroad, 1994).
- King, M. L., *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, ed. by C. Carson (New York: Intellectual Properties Management in association with Warner Books, 2001).
- Latham, R., 'Patterns of the Spirit: Towards a Council,' in *Gales of Change: responding to a shifting missionary context*, ed. by B. Thorogood (Geneva, WCC Publications, 1994), pp. 214-237.
- Lindsey, Hal, and C. C. Carlson, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (Grand Rapids, MI; Zondervan, 1970)
- McGrath, A. E., *A Scientific Theology, Vol. 2: Reality*. (London: T & T Clark, 2002)
- Macpherson, Duncan, 'Michael Prior, the Bible and Anti-Semitism', *Holy Land Studies*, 6.2 (2007), 145.
- Mahony L., *Proactive Presence: Field Strategies for Civilian Protection*, (Geneva: Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, 2006)
- Mahony, L. and L. E. Eguren, *Unarmed Bodyguards: International Accompaniment for the Protection of Human Rights*. (West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 1997)
- Mandal, Thomas, *Living with Settlers: Interviews with Yanoun Villagers*, (Geneva: EAPPI/Norwegian Church Aid, 2006)

- Martin, Clarice, 'A Chamberlain's Journey and the Challenge of Interpretation for Liberation,' in *The Bible and Liberation: Political and Social Hermeneutics*, ed. by N. K. Gottwald and R. A. Horsley (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 1993) pp. 485-503
- Martinson, Paul Varo, *Mission at the Dawn of the 21st Century*, ed. by Paul Varo Martinson (Minneapolis, MN: Kirk House Publishers, 1999)
- Mathewes, Charles, *A Theology of Public Life*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007),
- Miles, M. B. and A. M. Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*. (Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications, 1994)
- Morris, B., *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)
- Moser-Puangsuwan, Y. and T. Weber, *Nonviolent Intervention Across Borders: A Recurrent Vision*. (Honolulu, HI: Spark M. Matsunaga Institute for Peace, University of Hawai'i, 2000)
- Newbigin, Lesslie, *The Open Secret: Sketches for a Missionary Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978)
- Norrie, Alan, *Dialectic and Difference: Dialectical Critical Realism and the Grounds of Justice*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2010)
- O'Connor, Jerome Murphy, *The Holy Land: An Oxford Archaeological Guide from Earliest Times to 1700*, fourth edition, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)
- The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, second edn., ed. by F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone (London: Oxford University Press, 1974)
- Christians in the Holy Land*, ed. by M. Prior and W. Taylor (London: World of Islam Festival Trust, 1994), p.48.
- Prior, Michael, *The Bible and Colonialism: A Moral Critique* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997)
- Prior, Michael, 'Ethnic Cleansing and the Bible: A Moral Critique', *Holy Land Studies*, 1.1 (2002), 37-59
- 'Reflective practice – towards a more coherent programme', unpublished report (Red Kite Partners, 2006).
- Rejoice and Sing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991). A hymnbook of the United Reformed Church
- Romero, Archbishop Oscar, *Voice of the Voiceless: The Four Pastoral Letters and Other Statements*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985)
- Ruether, Rosemary Radford, and Herman J. Ruether, *The Wrath of Jonah: The Crisis of Religious Nationalism in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, second edn., (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002)
- Said, Edward, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1978)
- Sanneh, L. O., *Translating the message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2009)
- Sizer, S., *Christian Zionism: Road Map to Armageddon?* (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity, 2004)
- Smith, G., *Oxford 1937: The Universal Christian Council for Life and Work Conference* (Frankfurt am Main; Oxford: Peter Lang, 2004)

- Staff of the Division for Global Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 'The Accompaniment Model of Mission', *Word & World*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (2005), 204-205
- 'Statement of the Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church (Version II, as approved by General Assembly, 1990)', *Rejoice and Sing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), no. 761
- Sugirtharajah, R. S., *The Bible and Empire: Postcolonial Explorations*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)
- Sugirtharajah, R. S., *The Bible and the Third World: Precolonial, Colonial and Postcolonial Encounters* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001)
- Swinton, J. and H. Mowatt, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London: SCM, 2006)
- Tanner, Kathryn, *Christ the Key*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)
- Tanner, Kathryn, *Jesus, Humanity and the Trinity*, (Fortress Press, Minneapolis MN, 2001)
- Theological Reflection on Accompaniment: A Workshop Organised by the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel of the Commission of the Churches on Internal Affairs in Partnership with Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches, Geneva, 28-30 September 2005*. (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2006)
- Thompson, Judith, Stephen Pattison and Ross Thompson, *SCM Studyguide to Theological Reflection* (London: SCM Press, 2008)
- Volf, M., 'Against a Pretentious Church: A Rejoinder to Bell's Response.' *Modern Theology* 19:2 (2003), 281-285.
- Volf, Miroslav, *Exclusion and Embrace: a theological exploration of identity, otherness, and reconciliation*. (Nashville TN: Abingdon Press, 1996)
- Volf, M., 'Liberation Theology after the End of History: an exchange.' *Modern Theology* 19:2 (2003) 261-269.
- Volf, M., "'The Trinity is our Social Program": the doctrine of the Trinity and the shape of social engagement', *Modern Theology* 14:3 (1998), 403-423
- WCC and EAPPI Consultation Meeting No. 2, Geneva, 1-2 February 2002. Manuscript notes of the meeting are held in the EAPPI archives at Friends' House, Euston, London. [PD ref: P90100895]
- Whitelam, Keith W., *The Invention of Ancient Israel: The Silencing of Palestinian History* (London: Routledge, 1996)
- Winch, Peter, *The Idea of a Social Science and its Relation to Philosophy*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008)
- Wolcott, Harry F., *Writing Up Qualitative Research*, (London: Sage, 2009), p. 38
- Wright, N. T., *The Challenge of Jesus*, (London: SPCK, 2000)
- Younan, M., *Witnessing for Peace: In Jerusalem and the World*, ed. by F. Strickert (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 2003)

## ONLINE PUBLICATIONS

American Friends Service Committee, [quakernobel.org/history](http://quakernobel.org/history), [accessed 14 March 2017]

Applied Research Institute in Jerusalem, [www.arij.org](http://www.arij.org), [accessed 7 March 2015]

Arian, Asher, Raphael Ventura and Michael Philippov, 'Israeli Secularism in the Guttman Centre Polls 1990-2008'. The Israel Democracy Institute (2008). <https://en.idi.org.il/articles/9947>, [accessed 26 March 2017]

Bethlehem University, [www.bethlehem.edu](http://www.bethlehem.edu) [accessed 10 September 2011]

BBC (2008), 'On this day, 25 February, 1994: Jewish settler kills 30 at holy site.'  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/february/25/newsid\\_4167000/4167929.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/february/25/newsid_4167000/4167929.stm),  
[accessed 6 March 2017]

Bingham, John, *The Daily Telegraph*, (2015)  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/11399986/Vicar-who-blamed-Israel-for-911-attacks-is-banned-from-writing-about-the-Middle-East.html>, [accessed 20 March 2017]

B'tselem, 'Acting the Landlord: Israel's Policy in Area C, the West Bank,' Report Summary, (June 2013)  
[http://www.btselem.org/press\\_releases/20130605\\_area\\_c\\_report](http://www.btselem.org/press_releases/20130605_area_c_report). [accessed 24 March 2017]

*Church Times* staff reporter, 'Occupation 'a sin' says theologian', (2016),  
<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2016/8-july/news/world/occupation-a-sin-says-theologian>,  
[accessed 12 March 2017]

Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) Palestine Projects, <http://www.cpt.org/work/palestine> [accessed 6 September 2011]

Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI), [www.eappi.org](http://www.eappi.org),  
[accessed 25th March 2017]

Ecumenical Monitoring Programme in South Africa,  
<http://www.historicalpapers.wits.ac.za/inventory.php?iid=8120>, [accessed 4th September 2011]

Gilad, Elon, 'What is Nakba Day? a brief history', *Haaretz* 14 May 2015,  
<http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.656267>, [accessed 12 November 2016]

Goldsmith, Leah, 'Life on Itamar', <http://www.shechem.org/itamar/eindex.html>, [accessed 11th February 2011]

Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, 'All thirteen Eastern and Oriental Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant Churches of Jerusalem: A Faithful Appeal,' (9 November 2000), <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/international/conflict8.html> [accessed 6 September 2011]

Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, 'Appeal from the Churches of Jerusalem', (24 March 2001),  
<http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/international/palestine/conflict10.html>, [accessed 27 August 2011]

Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, 'An Easter Message of Their Beatitudes the Patriarchs and their Excellencies the Heads of Churches of Jerusalem,' (15th April 2001), <http://www.al-bushra.org/hedchrch/ap15.htm>, [accessed 8 September 2011]

Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Declaration of Independence', (14 May 1948)  
<http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/declaration%20of%20establishment%20of%20state%20of%20israel.aspx> [accessed 24th March 2017]

*The Jerusalem Post*, <http://www.jpost.com>, accessed [7 June 2011]

*The Jerusalem Post*, 'Machsom Watch discusses checkpoint with Halutz.', (3 May 2006), ,  
<http://www.jpost.com/Israel/Machsom-Watch-discusses-checkpoint-with-Halutz>, [accessed 12 June 2011]

Kafala, Tarik, BBC News Online, 'Intifada then and Now.' , (8 December 2000),  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/1061537.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/1061537.stm), [accessed 5 September 2011]

Lutheran World Federation, 'An encouragement for peace-building.',  
<https://www.lutheranworld.org/news/encouragement-peace-building>, [accessed 27 February 2017]

'Critical Realism List', [lists.econ.utah.edu/mailman/listinfo/critical-realism](http://lists.econ.utah.edu/mailman/listinfo/critical-realism), ed. by A. Norrie

O'Loughlin, T., *The Guardian*, 'Census finds Palestinian population up by 30%', (2008)  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/feb/11/israelandthepalestinians.population>, [accessed 18 March 2017]

Peace Brigades International (PBI), [www.peacebrigades.org](http://www.peacebrigades.org), [accessed 14 March 2017]

Steiman, D., 'The settlements are illegal under international law.' *The Jerusalem Post* (2013),  
<http://www.jpost.com/printarticle.aspx?id=336507>, [accessed 21 March 2017]

Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation, [krf.se/en/](http://krf.se/en/), [accessed 14 March 2017]

Tantur Ecumenical Institute, [www.tantur.org](http://www.tantur.org), [accessed 10 September 2011]

Temporary International Presence in the City of Hebron, [www.tiph.org](http://www.tiph.org), [accessed 5 September 2011]

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 'Report Report on UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people: Developments in the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.' Ref: TD/B/62/3, UN Trade and Development Board., 14-25 September 2015, Item 10 (b), Geneva, Switzerland. [http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/tdb62d3\\_en.pdf](http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/tdb62d3_en.pdf), [accessed 19 March 2017]

United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), [www.ochaopt.org](http://www.ochaopt.org), [accessed 7 March 2015]

United Nations and World Council of Churches, 'Praying, speaking out and acting together: Theological Reflection on Advocacy,' A joint contribution of the WCC's Global Platform for Theological Reflection and the United Nations Advocacy Week, Manhasset, New York, (November 20-22, 2009), [www.oikoumene.org/en/folder/documents-pdf/GPTR2009report.pdf](http://www.oikoumene.org/en/folder/documents-pdf/GPTR2009report.pdf), [accessed 14 March 2017]

West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, <http://www.west-eastern-divan.org/>, [accessed 7 March 2015]

World Council of Churches (WCC), [www.oikoumene.org](http://www.oikoumene.org), [accessed 19th March 2017]

WCC Amsterdam Assembly (1948), 'Concerns of the churches - The emergence of Israel as a state.' Extract from Report of Committee IV, 1st August 1948.

WCC Central Committee Potsdam, Germany, 'Israeli-Palestinian Conflict - Minute on the situation in the Holy Land after the outbreak of the second Palestinian uprising', (29 January 2001), adopted by the Central Committee, Potsdam, Germany, 29 January to 6 February 2001,

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-commissions/international-affairs/regional-concerns/middle-east/israeli-palestinian-conflict-minute-on-the-situation-in-the-holy-land-after-the-outbreak-of-the-second-palestinian-uprising.html>, [accessed 25 August 2011]

WCC Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA), 'Statement on Israel's obligations as occupying power: Issued by the CCIA on the occasion of the Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, Geneva, 5 December 2001.', (5 December 2001), <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-commissions/international-affairs/regional-concerns/middle-east/statement-on-israels-obligations-as-occupying-power.html>, [accessed 25th August 2011]

WCC Central Committee Potsdam, Germany (2001), 'Report of the Public Issues Committee,' Document No. PI 6.2, 29th January to 6th February 2001, <http://wcc-coe.org/wcc/who/cc2001/pi6-2-e.html#minute>, [accessed 9 September 2011]

WCC Central Committee, 'Statement on the ecumenical response to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the Holy Land.' (26 August to 3 September 2002), <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-commissions/international-affairs/regional-concerns/middle-east/statement-on-the-ecumenical-response-to-the-israeli-palestinian-conflict-in-the-holy-land.html>, [accessed 9 September 2011]

WCC Executive Committee, 'Resolution on Ecumenical Response to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict,' (11 to 14 September 2001), <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-commissions/international-affairs/regional-concerns/middle-east/resolution-on-ecumenical-response-to-the-palestinian-israeli-conflict.html>, [accessed 9 September 2011]

WCC Office of Communication Press Release, 'What would it mean for the world if there were no Christian Palestinians left in the Holy Land?' (6 August 2001), <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/news/press/01/26pre.html>, [accessed 10 September 2011]

WCC Press Centre, News, 22 February 2017, 'Bishop Younan awarded Niwano Peace Prize', <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/bishop-younan-awarded-niwano-peace-prize>, [accessed 27 February 2017]

WCC Press Release, PR-01-14, (4 February 2001), <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/news/press/01/cc-releases/14pre.html>, [accessed 6 September 2011]

WCC Press Release, PR-01-18, 5 February 2001. <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/news/press/01/cc-releases/18pre.html>, [accessed 6 September 2011]

WCC Press Release, PR-01-40, (29th October 2001), EAPPI archives, Euston, London.